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Damian Lewis
Why I'm in a band at 55

Magazine

What I feed my four children
Joe Wicks

Weekend

Row professor found dead

Academic at centre of plagiarism dispute discovered 'unresponsive' at a London address

Georgia Lambert

Jason Arday, the former Cambridge professor at the centre of a plagiarism row, has been found dead.

He was found "unresponsive" at an address in Battersea, south London, yesterday afternoon, and was later pronounced dead at the scene.

Arday, 41, resigned as professor of sociology of education at the University of Cambridge this month after allegations of plagiarism. He had been the university's youngest black professor, joining in 2023. He also faced claims of exaggerating his biography and personal achievements, including his charity work.

In a statement issued by his publisher, Simon & Schuster UK, Arday's family said: "Jason was subjected to a campaign of sustained abuse for the more than three years since he accepted the role of professor at Cambridge University by those who would leave no stone unturned in their quest to undermine him. The campaign of misinformation was too much for Jason, who was a gentle man and who always wanted to see the best in everyone. We are in shock to have lost this amazing father, partner, brother, uncle and son. We won't comment further at this point beyond asking the press to leave us alone now."

Jason Arday resigned from his Cambridge post after the university announced an inquiry

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said that officers were called by the London Ambulance Service at 3.12pm "following a report that a man had been found unresponsive inside a property

Continued on page 7

BACKGRID

Macron's jet tu holiday

President Macron's critics accused him of "megalomania" after he was photographed jet-skiing and hydrofoiling on his three-week break during a summer marked by forest fires in France World, page 43

Burnham calls up the military to tackle fires

Laurence Sleator Transport Correspondent
Larisa Brown Defence Editor
Charlie Parker

Andy Burnham has sent in the army to fight wildfires raging across "tinderbox" Britain after homes were destroyed and two trains derailed in less than 24 hours.

The prime minister has also banned disposable barbecues, appointed a fire minister and pledged to buy European-style firefighting aircraft.

Emergency alerts went to millions of phones shortly after 7pm yesterday, warning of the "very high risk" of wildfires and ordering people not to use barbecues, garden incinerators or firepits.

The wildfire in Stourbridge in the West Midlands left six people in hospital, including a child and three firefighters, and destroyed 19 homes. Elsewhere, more than 35 fires threatened properties, including in Tamworth, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent.

A train with 62 people on board derailed in Essex less than 24 hours after 20 people were injured in a similar incident at Lewes. In the latest accident, at Wickford, a Greater Anglia train came off the tracks but remained upright.

Visiting Stourbridge, Burnham called the fires "utterly devastating", adding: "Britain is a tinderbox right now ... It's quite an eerie sight to walk past a home that would have been kind of a family hub just yesterday, now completely gutted."

He added: "Fires have destroyed homes, forced people to evacuate and left firefighters injured while protecting others ... Farmers are watching crops fail and firefighters have saved [us from] hundreds of wildfires in a matter of weeks. This is what climate change

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News

Today's highlights

7.35am **Ben Wallace**, former defence secretary
8.05am The Times columnist **Fraser Nelson**
2.30pm The Times special correspondent **Anthony Loyd**
3.30pm **Alex James**, right, the Blur bassist turned farmer
6.05pm **Sir Laurie Bristow**, the UK's last ambassador to Afghanistan

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TODAY'S EDITION

Crown Estate land deal row

The Crown Estate has been accused of potentially costing the taxpayer £140 million in lost revenue over the sale of land that could be developed into 7,000 homes. The Orchard Portman Estate near Taunton, which spans 1,100 acres of undeveloped farmland, was sold to Taylor Wimpey for £12.5 million without an uplift clause. Page 6

Five years on in Afghanistan

Five years after the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of American troops, women are almost invisible and the country remains mired in crisis. Many of Afghanistan's fighters talk nostalgically of war but a severe economic crisis has left 17 million people facing acute food insecurity. Pages 40-41

Plea to avoid budget leaks

The boss of one of Britain's biggest insurance and savings companies has warned the chancellor not to leak possible tax changes in the weeks before his first budget. Dame Amanda Blanc, chief executive of Aviva, the FTSE 100 giant, said she had asked John Healey to "not fly kites" and to crack down on rumours. Page 45

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Why Lady is the comedy film of the summer
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Amorim feels heat in Milan before United reunion
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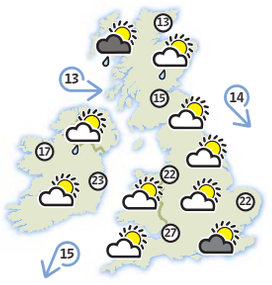

Rain and showers in northern Scotland, otherwise mainly dry with sunny spells. Full forecast, page 73

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Young with mental health needs get help to find jobs

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Young people will be given more support to help them find work instead of being "left to languish" on lengthy NHS lists for conditions including ADHD and autism under plans being considered as part of a major review.

Alan Milburn, the former Labour health secretary who is advising the government on youth unemployment, has expressed concern that the health service is taking a "one size fits all" approach and failing to recognise that conditions range in severity.

An interim report published this year said that the system had a "tendency to medicalise forms of distress", leaving people on NHS waiting lists for years instead of supporting them to find jobs.

Milburn's review, which will be published in the autumn, is looking at whether more immediate forms of support, such as "talking therapies" and online advice, could help people with moderate mental health conditions find work. For those with higher needs, employment specialists could be placed in clinical teams so that attempts to find work happen alongside treatment.

The number of children and young people waiting for an ADHD assessment rose from about 21,000 in April 2019 to about 270,000 last December. More than one million people aged 16 to 24 are not in education, employment or training, prompting concerns that a generation is being written off.

A source familiar with the Milburn review said: "We can't leave young people to languish on waiting lists when we could be giving them earlier support to get them back into work or learning. We need to move beyond the 'one size fits all' systems."

Professor Peter Fonagy, a clinical psychologist at University College London, is conducting a separate review into the increasing demand for mental health services and the possible overdiagnosis of conditions such as ADHD and autism.

Fonagy's interim report found there were "institutional incentives" to seek a mental health diagnosis as the "gateway" to special adjustments at school and work. He found that while there was "credible evidence of increasing psychological distress", normal difficulties may also "increasingly be interpreted primarily through a medical lens".

Nearly one in ten young adults "self-identify" as autistic, the report said, and there had been a marked increase in diagnoses among girls when they moved to secondary school.

"Historical analyses show that behaviours in children once regarded as within the range of normal variation, or even as something to be welcomed in some contexts, are now more often interpreted as requiring intervention or treatment," it said.

Milburn's interim review, published in May, said the current model was failing to convert diagnosis or treatment into sustained participation.

"A growing number of young people are in genuine distress, while the system is struggling to respond," it said. "The question is not how many young people have a diagnosable condition. The question is how many are able to participate and what the system is doing about it.

"All too often a diagnosis becomes a gateway into the health and welfare system and to a life outside the labour market. Instead of assuming that people with a diagnosis cannot participate, the first question the system should be asking is what can they do and how can it enable that to happen."

Met accidentally discloses details of Al Fayed 'victims'

Steven Swinford

The Metropolitan Police inadvertently disclosed the email addresses of 143 people who have alleged that they were sexually abused by Mohamed Al Fayed, the late owner of Harrods.

Scotland Yard said it inadvertently copied in all those who have signed up to receive a monthly update for victims instead of blind copying them.

It meant that their email addresses were visible to everyone on the distribution list, despite the fact that most of them wish to remain anonymous.

The update revealed that a further three suspects in their 70s and 80s had been interviewed under caution.

The breach took place over five separate emails on Tuesday and the Met has referred itself to the Information Commissioner's Office. It is considering providing further support to the victims along with additional safeguards.

The Met said: "On Tuesday August 11, officers issued a monthly update to victims regarding progress in our investigation into those who may have facilitated Mohamed Al Fayed's offending.

"The update was to confirm a further three suspects, one aged in their 70s and two in their 80s, have recently been interviewed under caution, bringing the total number interviewed under caution as part of the investigation to seven. Inquiries remain ongoing.

"Due to human error, recipients' email addresses were visible to others on the distribution list. The issue was identified quickly and immediate action was taken. We understand the impact this may have on victims and sincerely apologise."

The Times has been told that there were 143 victims on the list, while the total number of recipients was 159.

Earlier this year, the Met sent the personal details of a woman who says she was trafficked by Al Fayed and raped by his associate to the wrong person.

Joanna Brittan gave a statement to Devon & Cornwall police in 2017 which was then transferred to the Met. She later discovered that the Met had sent handwritten notes of her account, as well as her address, contact number and date of birth, to another alleged victim who lived in Australia.

Al Fayed, who died in August 2023 aged 94, is accused of abusing about 400 women and girls between the late 1970s and the early 2000s. Many were young staff working in his businesses, including Harrods.

Review may dilute electric car targets

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

Half the new cars sold by 2030 could still be part petrol or diesel after the government launched a review into one of its net zero targets.

The government is reassessing its zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate, under which sales of new pure petrol and diesel cars must end by 2030 and all new cars must be fully electric by 2035. The overall target remains but the review, officially announced yesterday, will examine whether it is achievable.

Manufacturers are expected to sell an increasing percentage of electric vehicles or face fines. This year the target is 33 per cent, rising to 38 per cent next year and 80 per cent by 2030.

For cars, the 80 per cent ZEV target by 2030 could be reduced to 70 per cent, 60 per cent or 50 per cent. Dropping to 50 per cent would mean half the cars sold that year could be plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV), which combine a petrol or diesel engine with an electric motor and rechargeable battery. About one in four cars sold are electric, according to the government.

Sign up to be a Times Christmas charity

THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES
CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Times reporters

Charities are invited to apply to benefit from The Times and Sunday Times Christmas Appeal 2026.

Three organisations are normally chosen, typically two charities working mostly in the UK and one British-registered charity working overseas.

Applicants will need to suggest great ideas for news and features on the challenges they face, helping produce stories that will grab readers' imaginations and appeal to their generosity.

Over the course of the appeal, The Times and Sunday Times will highlight each organisation's work and invite readers to donate. Our writers will visit projects to speak to those who are benefiting from the charity's work. Articles will focus on compelling human stories, highlighting innovative, inspiring or surprising ways of tackling issues.

Applicants should provide a list of 10 to 12 ideas for stories, each focusing on a different aspect of their work. We aim to illustrate the articles with photographs and videos. Where possible, the stories will include graphics, so applicants should also aim to provide data.

Charities should highlight well-known patrons or ambassadors who could feature in the campaign. They should also include details of any matched funding that can be offered.

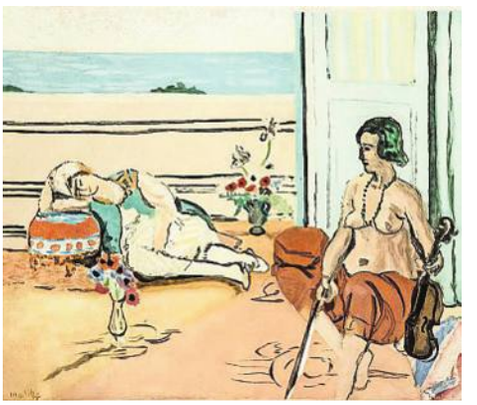
Applications should fill one or two pages of A4 text and be submitted by September 11, to charityappeal@thetimes.co.uk. Applications should be submitted as an attachment and not in the body of the email.

Apply yourselves, leading article, page 29

Abandoned fire extinguisher leads police to stolen €9 million artworks

Paintings by Cézanne, Matisse and Renoir were taken in a daring three-minute heist, **Tom Kington** writes

CARABINIERI,FONDAZIONE MAGNANI ROCCA/REUTERS



The carabinieri posed with the haul, including Odalisque on the Terrace by Henri Matisse, right, after announcing five arrests were made yesterday in connection with a three-minute heist in which the works were tore off the walls of the Magnani-Rocca Foundation's private museum near Parma

As art thefts go, the €9 million haul of works by Cézanne, Matisse and Renoir was top notch but what was truly impressive was the 180 seconds it took the gang of three men to steal them.

Security camera footage at the Magnani-Rocca Foundation's private museum near Parma on the night of March 22 showed the men smashing a window before two of them, wearing balaclavas and head torches, made a beeline for the works they tore off the walls and handed out of the window to their accomplice.

Italian police announced yesterday they had arrested five suspects, all Moldovan, and found the paintings hidden in the storeroom of a house in Parma, stashed in a cardboard box once used for a flat-screen TV.

"They were professionals, but we were better," one official told The Times.

The Louvre raiders in Paris made off with royal jewellery in seven minutes last year, but the Parma gang needed only three to steal Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Fish*, worth €3 million, Paul Cézanne's *Cup and a Plate of Cherries*, worth €6 million, and a print of *Odalisque on the Terrace* by Henri Matisse, worth €20,000.

Situated in a villa in grounds near the village of Mamiano di Traversetolo, the Magnani-Rocca museum was set up by Luigi Magnani, an art historian, in 1977 and includes works by Titian, Rubens, Van Dyck, Goya and Monet.

The video released by the carabinieri raised questions over the degree of security protecting the works. The thieves did not tiptoe around laser sensors and no sirens wailed as they pulled the paintings from the wall.

"They used a jammer to disable the alarm, and the further they got from the villa as they fled the scene, the weaker the effect of the jammer became and the alarm kicked in," said an investigative source.

When the gang broke in, they created a diversion by letting off a fire extinguisher near the lodge used by a security guard, the source said. They fled into the countryside around the villa just before police arrived.

Identifying the fire extinguisher left at the scene, even though its serial number had been scraped off, was they key to tracing the gang, prosecutors said. One of them had had access to the building it was stolen from. A broken tool used to smash the window, which was also left at the scene, was traced to the shop that sold it.

Police discovered the gang's main pursuit was robbing shops and offices, in one instance driving a vehicle through a supermarket's front window to steal the takings. Wiretaps were ordered before 13 properties were raided including the one harbouring the artworks.

Art experts have asked how the thieves hoped to sell the paintings, since a Google search would have revealed they were stolen. One suggestion was that the theft had been commissioned by a buyer. But a second investigative source told The Times it was unlikely the theft of the three paintings was carried out on commission. "This group were accomplished burglars but not art thieves, yet they still decided to steal the paintings," he said. "That is why they didn't know how to place them, and why the works were still stashed in Parma."

Stefano Roffi, a director at the museum, said it was "a happy day". "Finally the Magnani Rocca collection is complete," he said.

The Magnani-Rocca Foundation said it was determined to get the paintings back on display. "The best way to respond to those who steal beauty is to come and see it, to talk about it, to share it. The Magnani-Rocca is open," it said.

The death of the kiss? Anxious Gen Z are too shy to smooch

Sanchez Manning
Social Affairs Correspondent

A group of young people watching Ethan Hawke finally kiss Julie Delpy after hours of simply walking and talking around Vienna in 1995's *Before Sunrise* declared it "the most romantic thing they had ever seen".

But the scene doesn't reflect modern life, apparently. Research has shown that kissing is becoming rarer for Generation Z, and society in general.

A YouGov survey, commissioned by the oral care brand Waken, found that more than a third of Britons reported kissing romantically less often than they had five years ago. One in five said they had not been kissed in more than a year, the poll of more than 2,000 adults found.

This decline appears to be particularly acute among anxious Gen Zers, with almost a third of 18 to 24-year-olds saying they had avoided a kiss owing to lack of confidence. In comparison, only 9 per cent of over-55s said the same.

Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke in the 1995 romantic classic Before Sunrise

Chloe Combi, author of *Generation Z: Their Voices, Their Lives*, who organised the screening of *Before Sunrise*, blamed technology for the "death of romance" among young people.

"The whole thing [in *Before Sunrise*] is about their meeting randomly on the train," she said. "But technology has kind of robbed that experience because if it happened on a train today, they would be looking at their phones and watching a Netflix series."

Sarah Stein Lubrano, a social theorist, calls the phenomenon social atrophy. Gen Z are now "socially less risk-taking, more isolated and more celibate in all senses," she said. "Kissing is very vulnerable — it's all the mushy, soft, romantic things — and that's really difficult for people who already aren't that great at the social cues."

News Wildfires

Second derailment as experts

Charlie Parker
Laurence Sleator Transport Correspondent

Rail investigators in Lewes, East Sussex, had been working yesterday to determine how a train careered off the tracks, leaving carriages strewn on their side and 20 people injured, when the news came through just after 2pm of another derailment.

Eighty miles north in Essex, the rear carriages of the 13:51 Greater Anglia service carrying 62 passengers had come off the line near Wickford station.

This time the train stayed upright and no one was injured, but the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) is looking into the derailment.

The two crashes, which occurred less than 24 hours apart, came as 37 wildfires ripped across the country, destroying 19 homes and injuring a child and several firefighters.

Andy Burnham deployed the military and announced a series of emergency measures to battle the blazes, including a temporary ban on disposable barbecues. He said Britain was a tinderbox and he had never seen such devastation before.

Experts have blamed both rail incidents on the heatwave. The temperature was over 30C at both locations.

In July, Network Rail announced that, following the warm weather and lack of rain, "peat and clay that sits under long stretches of the railway on Anglia has dried out and shrunk" and caused the track to drop in places and become uneven.

It said that extra engineering works to treat dried out soil would take place and specifically mentioned the line between Southend Victoria and Wickford.

At Wickford, industry sources said images from the site suggested that part of the track may have buckled in the heat. Britain's steel tracks can be vulnerable to curving, particularly in warm weather, getting up to 20 degrees hotter than the air temperature, absorbing heat and expanding.

As passengers sought answers over what happened, some said that they warned Southern Rail about the safety of the tracks before the incident occurred.

Rob Dyke, 47, said he was on a train going into Lewes that day and his train also experienced problems.

"As we came into the Lamport area onto the approach to Lewes we heard a bang and felt the car shudder. Enough for people around us to have noticed, I looked at my friend and said, 'That's not right'.

"I spoke to the onboard service manager and said, 'Did you hear the bang as we came into Lamport'. He said, 'Yes I felt it and I reported it to the driver'".

James MacCleary, the Lewes MP, said the state of the track in the area "had been a concern for a while".

"I spoke to GTR [Southern's parent company] last week and asked them again to look into the stability of the track," he said. "I've seen people's drinks fly across tables when they've hit a bump, particularly on that stretch."

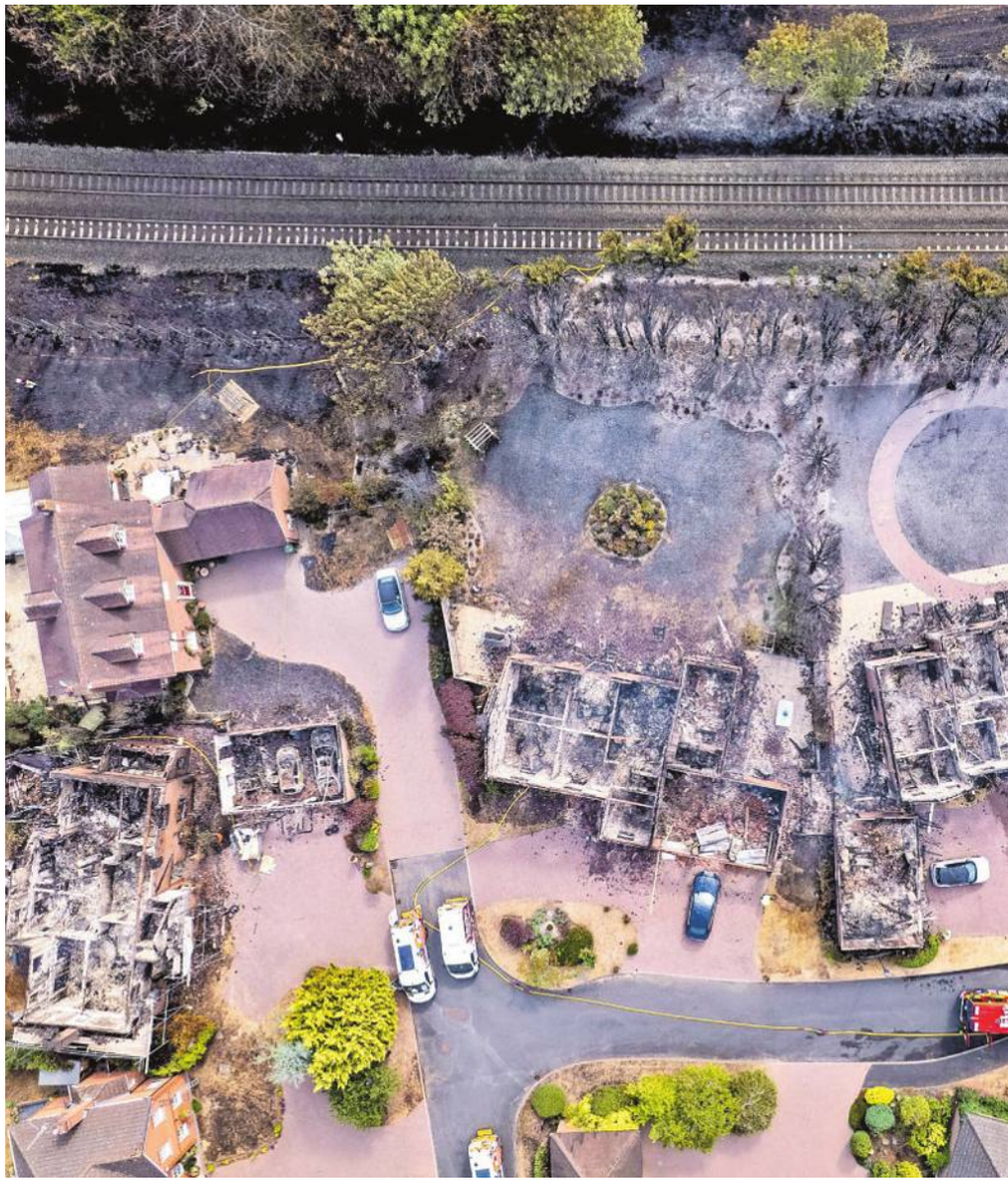
Another passenger said that she had experienced a "precarious and unstable" Southern Rail journey last week.

"It was just turbulence at first and then suddenly something slipped and then it felt like the train was moving wildly from one side to the other," she said. "I think it was the same spot [as the crash]."

In a statement Network Rail said that the hot weather was creating "exceptional challenges" to the railway but said the investigations into the two derailments will "look at all possible causes and factors".

"In response we have taken several additional proactive steps to manage and mitigate the impact on the railway, including closely monitoring the temperature of tracks, implementing speed restrictions where it is appropriate to do so, and planning track renewals around high temperatures," Martin Frobisher, group safety and engineering director of Network Rail, said. John Whitehurst, chief executive of Greater Thameslink Railway, came out to reassure passengers: "The railway is safe. These types of incidents are incredibly rare."

The Greater Anglia train came off the rails just outside Wickford, Essex. Experts have blamed the hot weather



Burnham said 100 military personnel had been deployed to tackle some of the 37 wildfires spreading across the country, four of which he said were large blazes. Earlier in the week the prime minister urged shops to stop selling disposable barbecues and hinted at a ban in the "longer term", but an-

Military called in to tackle fires 'started by arsonists'

Continued from page 1

looks like. We shouldn't just accept this as inevitable and I don't."

About 100 military personnel were sent to fight 12 large fires in Wales, some of which were believed to have started as a result of arson. Fin Monahan, the chief fire officer of south Wales, told The Times that the troops were digging trenches to slow the fire's spread and delivering water.

He said: "We have sent everyone we can up on to the hillsides. All non-essential activity in the headquarters has been stopped." The wildfires were spreading rapidly, destroying houses, and some firefighters were suffering from heat stress, he added.

The Met Office says the next meaningful rain for some areas is not forecast until the end of next week, although temperatures are set to fall.

Civilian drones and helicopters have also been deployed to help assess the situation and extinguish the fires.

Two people — a 23-year-old man and a 24-year-old woman — were arrested yesterday on suspicion of arson in connection with wildfires in Stoke-on-Trent that damaged four homes.

Heat issues were blamed for the second major train derailment. Serious injuries sustained by two victims of the first crash, near Lewes, were not deemed to be life threatening. Another 18 passengers who were injured were able to leave hospital yesterday.

Climate change denial and the UK's duty to adapt, letters, page 28

'We are in unknown territory' — farmers struggle to cope in drought

'It's been a pain in the arse," George Tomlinson said, describing how a record-breaking dry summer has affected his farm. "It doesn't matter how good a farmer you are, you can't farm without rain," said the 29-year-old, who runs a 1,440-acre mixed farm near Wrexham with his brother Will (Adam Vaughan writes).

In a sign of the disruption, and what it might mean for supermarket staples, the farmer sold 60 of his cows. With no grass growth, he is already feeding cattle with winter feed — so chose to avoid paying for expensive forage later.

Much of British agriculture is struggling. Record heatwaves at crucial moments in crops' development, have left farmers facing the worst harvest on record.

For consumers, it means the prospect of shortages and price rises. For politicians, it raises questions over food security in a country that imports 40 per cent of its food.

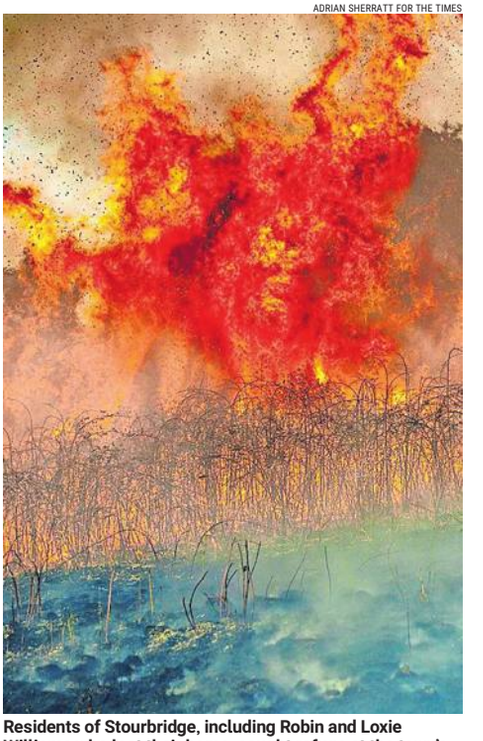
"Since the beginning of July, our concerns have grown daily. There still doesn't look like there's any meaningful rain in the forecast," said Tom Bradshaw, president of the National Farmers' Union (NFU).

Potatoes are imprisoned because the soil has so little moisture that harvesting would damage them. Heat-sensitive brassicas such as cauliflower are yellowing. Yields for winter wheat and spring barley are down 13 per cent and 26 per cent respectively, according to figures published by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.

The heat meant 18.5 million litres less milk was produced last month, as cows focused on keeping cool. Bradshaw said a fast-spreading

warn of dry soil under tracks

ADRIAN SHERRATT FOR THE TIMES



Residents of Stourbridge, including Robin and Loxie Williams who lost their home, sought refuge at the town's golf club. Fire broke out at a park in Sheffield on Thursday

nounced an immediate ban after wildfires raged across the West Midlands on Thursday.

He said that some of the fires were likely to have been started by barbecues, but there was no certainty yet.

Two people, a 23-year-old man and a 24-year-old woman, were arrested yesterday on suspicion of arson in connection with wildfires in Stoke-on-Trent that damaged four homes.

'I ran between burning bushes as flames closed in'

Charlotte Alt, Will Humphries
Ed Halford, Mario Ledwith

Paul Cliff was working from his home in Stourbridge on Thursday when the local WhatsApp group lit up with chat about a wildfire in a farmer's field.

Cliff went upstairs to close some windows when he noticed burning embers drifting across next door's house, quickly turning the conifer bushes on his drive ablaze. "Within minutes [fire] was in the roof of our house," Cliff, 60, said.

His wife, Connie, also 60 and a lawyer, was working at her office in Birmingham when Cliff called her, struggling to breathe because of the thick black smoke filling their home.

"I told him, 'You've got to go down the drive, you've got to get out'," she said. "He was frightened to leave and he said, 'I can hear it in the roof space now'. I said, 'I don't care what you do but you've got to leave the house'."

She told Cliff, also a lawyer, to get a tea towel, soak it in water and put it over his head "because ash was falling down on him". Cliff sounded like he was "freezing up" on the phone, she recalled, so she had to "stay as calm as I could on the phone and be really firm with him because he said, 'I can't leave' ".

She said: "I had to tell him calmly but firmly, 'That's not a choice, that's not an option, you have to get out — even if that means you have to scale a fence'."

Cliff recalled yesterday: "It was all adrenaline. I had to just focus on how am I going to get off my drive without getting burnt because there were bushes burning on either side of the drive. I had a split-second thought, 'Do I just get my car out?' But then I couldn't get through the electric gates [because the fire had disabled them], so I quickly wrote that off and just ran."

Nineteen houses were destroyed and a further 18 damaged by the fire that spread across more than 500 acres in the West Midlands town on Thursday afternoon. Fifty-four patients were treated by paramedics, the region's fire service said, and six firefighters were taken to hospital to be treated for smoke inhalation and heat exhaustion after working through the night.

When Cliff reached clear air he stood in the road with 20 to 30 neighbours who had also lost their homes. The Cliffs were planning to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary next week and he had bought his wife some "lovely rubies" that were left in the house. Their daughter's wedding dress was also being stored at their house. "That's the worst part about it," Cliff said. "It's not the house itself, it's the things in it."

Nigel John Wright, 61, was in Majorca nervously watching Ring doorbell footage on his phone as flames engulfed his family home at 3.30pm on Thursday. "There was panic — screaming, shouting and banging noises at the windows, with firefighters yelling to evacuate," Wright said.

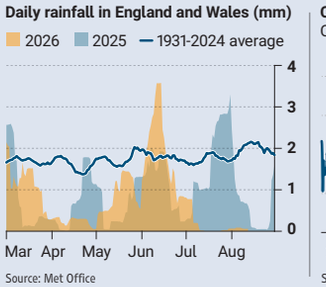
His wife, Laura, rushed out of their three-storey home of 26 years in the Brunswick Gate development and sped away in her car, leaving behind her phone and everything else. "I watched my back fence catch light, with flames 20ft in the air as they travelled down the side of my back garden, and then the signal went on my Ring cameras and that was that," Wright said.

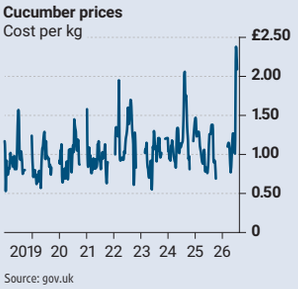
Wright, whose father died three months ago, said the most upsetting aspect of the fire was that "photographs and all those sorts of things have just gone up in smoke".

Loxie and Robin Williams, grandparents in their seventies, lost their family home of 26 years to the fire. They were prevented from returning to their house by emergency crews at about 2pm. "It hadn't gone on fire then," Loxie said. "It later went on fire and it's absolutely gutted now. It's just such a shock. All we've got now is the clothes we are standing in, one pair of shoes."

Robin Williams, a former butcher, said: "At least we've got our lives." Loxie agreed: "That's the main thing."

Feeling the heat





climate change-driven outbreak of bluetongue disease in livestock was an "extra burden".

"I feel like we are in unknown territory," said Tom Lancaster, pointing to very low soil moisture and unprecedented heat stress on livestock. Lancaster, head of land, food and farming at the ECIU, a think tank, said shortages were possible in field vegetables.

Shortages of broccoli and cauliflower could emerge in a few weeks, according to Guy Singh-Watson, a farmer and founder of the vegetables box scheme Riverford. The firm's salad-growing operations in the southwest have "run out of water". Riverford has been short of peppers from a farm in western France and has even seen sunburnt tomatoes grown in the UK.

Just importing more from other European countries is not necessarily an option, he said. "They've all got all the same problems," said Singh-Watson. That was the case last month when Sainsbury's suffered cucumber shortages because growers in Spain and Morocco were hit by heatwaves.

Lea Valley Growers' Association, which produces about 80 million cucumbers and 100 million sweet peppers a year in UK glasshouses, is battling to keep plants cool. If temperatures are too high, produce may fail the strict aesthetic standards that supermarkets demand.

"It means the fruit won't grow to the supermarket specifications. It won't get to the [specified] weight or size," said Lee Stiles, secretary of the association. While retailers might relax these rules if they run out of alternative supplies, they historically prefer to search for imports first, Stiles added.

One sizeable salad grower has already collapsed. MBJSC Produce Limited went into administration this month. The administrator did not comment.

The Environment Agency has said it is planning limits on how much water farmers can draw in East Anglia, while on-farm reservoirs remain low. "That could have a really significant impact," Lancaster said of how tighter restrictions could hamper irrigation.

For shoppers, the immediate price rises will be in fresh fruit and vegetables, said Chris Jaccarini, an economist based at the ECIU. He also expects meat prices to rise. The cost of cheese could also rise. Heat stress has cut the amount of protein in the milk used to make cheese, making it more expensive to produce the same amount.

Jacarini said that he feared consumers would respond to rises by eating unhealthier diets.

Tim Lang, professor at City St George's University of London, said there would be shortages of some fresh fruit and vegetables. He argued there was a need for more food storage at a national and regional level, noting the US, Sweden and Switzerland maintained stockpiles.

Defra said: "The UK has a highly resilient food system, drawing on strong domestic production and international trade and we do not expect the dry weather to have any impact on national food security."

News

ZACHARY CULPIN/BNPS

Field to fork Diners feast on dishes prepared by Alexander Lascelles for the Sunflower Supper Club, which meets at Punchbowl Farm near Warminster, Wiltshire

Taxpayers may lose out on £140m after land sale by Crown Estate

Ali Mitib

The Crown Estate has been accused of potentially costing the taxpayer £140 million in lost revenue over the sale of a plot of land that could be developed into 7,000 homes.

The Orchard Portman Estate near Taunton in Somerset, which spans 1,100 acres of undeveloped farmland, was sold to the property developer Taylor Wimpey for £12.5 million in 2018.

The deal did not include an uplift clause which would have allowed the Crown Estate to recoup any uplift in value should the land be developed.

The Crown Estate is an independent private business that manages property and land all over Britain and splits its profits between the taxpayer and the King via the sovereign grant.

Campaigners believe that newly uncovered plans to build Taunton Garden Village, a new town of up to 7,000 homes, could increase the value of the land by £560 million.

This would suggest the taxpayer has lost out by about £140 million if a typical uplift clause of 25 per cent had been agreed at the time of the sale.

The recent plans are yet to be put forward for planning permission, but were disclosed to the Save Blackdown Vale campaign group through a freedom of information request. They have sparked calls for an investigation by the public accounts committee, the parliamentary committee that oversees government spending, into the deal.

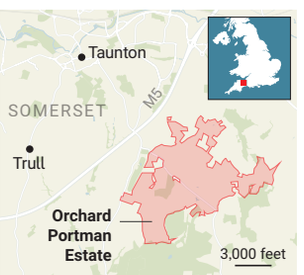
Rob Hossell, a member of the campaign, said: "We thought this was very unusual at the time, particularly after speaking to a number of planning professionals, none of whom could recall a comparable sale of land without an uplift/overage clause.

"There needs to be full accountability for the decisions surrounding the original sale. The Crown Estate manages a substantial public asset and its profits ultimately benefit the public finances.

"It is entirely reasonable to ask whether the public interest was adequately protected."

Colin Fisher, another member of Save Blackdown Vale, claimed that the sale "exposes all sorts of flaws in the governance of the Crown Estate", adding that he feared the character of the local area could be changed by the development. "Somerset could achieve what it needs to achieve in terms of targets by organic growth around existing settlements. It doesn't need any new settlements to do that. And it particularly doesn't need a settlement in an area of great agricultural and landscape importance," he told The Times.

Gideon Amos, the MP for Taunton and Wellington, has also written to the public accounts committee calling for it to examine the deal, renewing a call for transparency he first made at the time of the sale. "The campaign [for transparency] culminated in my bid to get parliament to investigate the sale — unfortunately MPs on the public accounts committee at the time decided not to do so," he said. "Now chickens are coming home to roost with the development that was always going to be proposed following a sale of this kind.



"The 7,000-home proposal could mean a new town of 15,000 plus people across the motorway from Taunton which could overwhelm the balanced development we would all want to see in our county."

The sale was subject to both an internal investigation and an independent review by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, which found no evidence of wrongdoing and that the sale was conducted through a competitive market process. The Orchard Portman Estate has now been submitted in the call for sites, an early-stage consultation where the local authority asks landowners, developers, and the public to suggest land that might be suitable for future development, launched by Somerset council last year An outline planning application is yet to be submitted for approval to the council.

A brochure for the development claims that Taunton Garden Village could be a "genuinely transformative project for Taunton which helps tackle inequality and enhance the lives of people in Somerset".

An open-air amphitheatre, a woodland trail, "community grow patches", and a community shop supporting farmers are among the amenities highlighted in the brochure.

The Crown Estate said: "The sale of Orchard Portman was completed in 2019 and has already been subject to previous governance and review, including both an internal and a separate independent review. These reviews concluded no breaches of policy or procedure had occurred. The land was sold through a competitive market process and achieved a sale price that exceeded both expectations and book value."

A spokesman for Taylor Wimpey said it "strongly refutes any allegations of wrongdoing in relation to the land acquisition; it was a competitive, open-market sales process." The company added that a plan for Taunton Garden Village was submitted to Somerset council's local plan call for sites, and that the company engages "extensively with local stakeholders to understand their views and requirements".

Quintagram® No 2647

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Wharf (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Male goose (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Rip off, fleece (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Opposed to whatever is said (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Half a shilling (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	C	C	C	D	D	D
D	D	E	E	E	E	G	I
I	K	L	N	N	N	O	O
P	R	R	R	S	T	X	Y

Solutions see page 79
Cryptic clues see Review page 45

No jail after fatal crash

A driver who knocked down and killed an 81-year-old woman in a car park just before Christmas has been given a suspended sentence. Linda Hall, 64, admitted causing the death of Rita Grimshaw, 81, by careless driving at Silverlink Shopping Park, North Tyneside. At the town's magistrates' court Hall was given 15 weeks, suspended for a year.

Ex-pupil's 'rape' threat

A chemistry teacher reported a former pupil for threatening to rape her after he told a podcast "I might want to f*** her" if he ever saw her again. At Harrow crown court Sally-Anne Bowen, 65, denies sexually abusing the man and another boy when they were at Christ's College, Finchley, in north London in the late 1980s. The trial continues.

Royal gardeners' strike

Gardeners at some of London's Royal Parks — including Hyde Park — will strike over pay. The workers voted 95 per cent in favour of a strike on a 75 per cent turnout, the GMB union said. Their proposed pay rise is 70p an hour, which the union says is "an insult". Skilled workers and leaders are currently paid 55p an hour above the London living wage.

Cold comfort farm

Residents of Capel Farm, an estate in Tonyrefail, Rhondda Cynon Taf, have persuaded their ice cream man Mark Edwards to return after the council told him off for playing his chimes after 7pm. One person had complained that he was playing them at 8pm. At first Edwards said he would bypass the estate, but will now return and sound his horn.

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A nightmarish saga at Cambridge

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

Jason Arday was celebrated on his appointment in 2023 as the youngest black professor at Cambridge University. It was a powerful good news story: a personable man appeared to have overcome great personal adversity to become a senior figure at a renowned institution.

He claimed to have been non-verbal until the age of 11 and unable to read and write until 18, but completed a PhD at Liverpool John Moores University and worked at Durham University before moving to Cambridge. In the past month, however, his back story and appointments came under scrutiny. Numerous allegations were made, including that parts of his PhD appeared to have been plagiarised, and that some of his personal boasts, to do with sporting achievements and charitable work, may have been exaggerated or fabricated. Many of the claims are in his memoir, *Great and Unfortunate Things*, which was published in the US this week and is due for release in the UK this month.

Arday resigned from his position at Cambridge last Wednesday after the university announced an investigation into him. The academic said he had suffered an unrelenting level of public scrutiny and personal attack which had taken a profound toll on him.

Analysis and anger turned to the institutions that had appointed and promoted him. Cambridge initially described criticism of him as a "vile campaign" before announcing two investigations: one into Arday's appointment and a wider review of its process of senior appointments.

Priyamvada Gopal, a professor of postcolonial studies at Cambridge's English faculty, said this week: "This is an institutional story as much as anything else. It has been nightmarish for many of us watching this unfold. The resignation is not the end of the story ... there are potential mistakes and missteps made by the university that need to be investigated.

"This cannot be a case of the university marking its own homework. We are absolutely clear that the investigation needs to be independent, not in the university's own hands, and needs to be completely transparent and accountable to the Cambridge community."

Arday continued to come under intense pressure from media and commentators after his resignation.

Sir Simon Baron-Cohen, the Cambridge-based clinical psychologist, had warned two weeks ago on social media: "One in four autistic people have planned or attempted suicide. That's why I'm very concerned about the impact of the media coverage on Professor Jason Arday, who is autistic.

"He continues to be systematically discredited over every detail of his life, daily. We should of course always investigate plagiarism to protect academic standards. However, I cannot stand by and watch when an autistic man is on the ground and the kicking continues. This is relentless bullying of a vulnerable autistic man and raises safe-guarding issues."

JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Jason Arday was called the "best in the world in terms of the research that you do" by Hilary Cremin, a senior professor at Cambridge, above. He said that he was non-verbal until the age of 11

Plagiarism row professor found dead

Continued from page 1

in SW8". His death was not believed to be suspicious, the force added.

Professor Deborah Prentice, the Cambridge vice-chancellor, said she was "desperately saddened", adding: "Our heartfelt sympathies go to Jason Arday's family and friends."

Lucy Powell, the education secretary, said she was "deeply shocked" to learn of Arday's death and that her condolences were with his friends and family. In his first interview after he was accused of plagiarising the work of other academics, Arday told The Times: "I think the cruelty that I've experienced and the positioning of me as this kind of liar and fantasist is totally unacceptable."

Diagnosed with autism, global developmental delay and dyslexia, he described himself as being non-verbal until 11 and overcoming illiteracy in his late teens. In an open resignation letter, Arday said that "the years since my appointment have been marked by an unrelenting level of public scrutiny and personal attack".

Cambridge began an investigation after it received information about Arday's qualifications and honorary appointments. Its findings will inform a review of the university's recruitment procedures for senior academic posts.

Kuwaiti royal accused of copying in his university thesis

Tom Ball, Eleanor Tait

A member of the Kuwaiti royal family who is one of the country's most senior economic officials has been accused of plagiarising passages of his dissertation for which he was awarded a PhD from Portsmouth University.

Concerns about the thesis of Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, whose uncle is the Emir of Kuwait, were raised with the university authorities in March. An anonymous whistleblower highlighted 35 instances of "apparent plagiarism" from sources including academic work, Wikipedia and newspaper articles.

"They [the instances] constitute direct copying of third-party text presented within the thesis as original academic work," they wrote.

Paul Mould, executive director of corporate governance at the university, said that the claims had been investigated and the thesis was "considered to be original".

However, Times analysis found multiple examples of what appeared to be verbatim and near-verbatim copying without attribution. There was no suggestion that Al-Sabah's fieldwork was not original. He did not comment.

The originality of Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's thesis was questioned

Portsmouth has a long relationship with Kuwait and educates more Kuwaitis than any other British university.

The claims come amid heightened scrutiny of academic standards after allegations of plagiarism against Jason Arday, who resigned this month from his professorial position at Cambridge and was found dead yesterday.

Al-Sabah is director of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, a public body that works to attract foreign investment into the country. He also serves on the board of the Kuwait Investment Authority, one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds which manages more than $1 trillion in assets worldwide, including in Britain. He is also on the board of trustees at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, the patron of which is the King.

Al-Sabah's 2011 thesis is entitled *Resource Curse Reduction Through Innovation: The Case of Kuwait*. Analysis found that three and a half pages of the dissertation appear to have been copied exactly from a 2005 book called *Innovation Management and New Product Development*. The author, Paul Trott, is professor of innovation management at Portsmouth University and was the supervisor of Al-Sabah's dissertation. Though Trott's book is cited in the dissertation's bibliography, the identical passages are not directly attributed. Also, Trott's work appears to be replicated elsewhere. Six consecutive paragraphs are also near-identical reproductions of Trott's work, with only minor changes. Trott did not respond to a request for comment.

Passages from other academic works also appear to have been copied verbatim or near verbatim. One passage appears to have been copied from a Wikipedia page on Resource Curse. Another sentence is identical to one from a Guardian article. The field data, interviews and analysis sections, however, do appear original. The apparent copying appears in theoretical chapters.

When contacted, Portsmouth University said that its investigation was "aligned with the UK research integrity office guidelines".

Jonathan Bailey, a plagiarism expert, said "a correction or some other action seems appropriate", but did not think it warranted degree revocation.

How the works compare

Al-Sabah's thesis - p.112
The view that much needs to be in place for innovation to occur and that there is a significant role for the state to play is confirmed by George Marshall, whose ideas were responsible for the rebuilding of Europe after the Second World War.

Trott's book - p.41
The view that much needs to be in place for innovation to occur and that there is a significant role for the state is confirmed by Alfred Marshall, whose ideas were responsible for the rebuilding of Europe after the Second World War.

Farage admits he may have sinned over gift of £5m

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent
Steven Swinford Political Editor

Nigel Farage faces months of scrutiny over undeclared donations after suggesting for the first time that he may have failed to register a £5 million "gift" from a cryptocurrency billionaire.

The Reform UK leader is the subject of a renewed investigation into his finances after winning the Clacton by-election with 63 per cent of the vote, beating Count Binface, who came second with 27 per cent.

Within hours of the victory being confirmed, Daniel Greenberg, the parliamentary commissioner for standards, said he had relaunched his investigation into Farage. The Reform leader, who insists he has done nothing wrong, is expected to be interviewed by Greenberg in the next few weeks.

The Times has been told that Greenberg's investigation could take another four months and if he finds Farage committed a major breach of Commons rules, then the matter will be taken up by the standards committee. That is predicted to take about six weeks to conclude, and Farage would be entitled to appeal, which means it may drag on until Easter of next year, a source familiar with the process said. If Farage is suspended it could result in another by-election.

The process means that Farage will continue to face questions over the gift from Christopher Harborne and the benefits in kind he received from George Cottrell, a convicted fraudster, in the year before he became an MP.

Farage wants to use his victory in the Clacton by-election as a platform to return to Reform's core issues of migration, crime and the cost of living. He said voters had "stuck up two fingers to the entire political establishment".

He conceded for the first time yesterday that he may have been required to register the gift as a donation. He told GB News: "Look, this is an overwhelming endorsement of me. I have had enough of being judged by mainstream media, being called a criminal.

"Do you know, if I made one sin, if I haven't filled in a piece of paper, I've broken no law, I've broken no tax law, I've taken no public money, I don't even own a motorhome. Maybe I haven't filled in a piece of paper. I'm confident that I'm right, we'll see where we go."

Farage was referencing the motorhome bought by Nicola Sturgeon's husband, Peter Murrell, using embezzled SNP funds.

The Reform leader received £5 million from Harborne, who is based in Thailand, in April 2024. He insisted that the gift was entirely personal and his to spend as he saw fit. He has given a series of explanations for the money, including that it was for his security and also as a reward for Brexit.

The gift was referred to the parliamentary standards commissioner as a potential breach of the MPs' code of conduct, which states that new MPs must declare any registrable benefits they received in the year before they were elected.

The rules say that "purely personal gifts or benefits" from family, or commercial loans, would not normally need to be registered. However, they also say that "both the possible motive of the giver and the use to which the gift is put" should be considered, adding: "If there is any doubt the gift should be registered."

An investigation by the standards commissioner can end with "rectification", as happened with Farage's previous breach of Commons rules over 17 late registrations of outside earnings including for media appearances. These were deemed inadvertent and resulted in an apology from him.

If Farage is found against, the matter will probably be referred to the standards committee — particularly, insiders said, given it was the second investigation he had faced in less than a year.

The committee is chaired by a Tory MP and made up of four Labour backbenchers, one other Tory and a Lib Dem, as well as seven lay members.

It could interview Farage in private and decide whether to recommend a punishment in the event of a serious breach of the Commons rules. Options range from forcing him to apologise to a suspension from parliament. The recommendation must be voted on by all MPs and is non-amendable.

A suspension of ten days or more would prompt a recall petition, which automatically leads to a by-election if it is signed by 10 per cent of constituents within six weeks.

Arron Banks, a close ally of Farage who is a former Reform mayoral candidate and Brexit campaigner, derided the committee that could decide the party leader's political fate. He welcomed Farage's victory, writing on social media that "the people have spoken, not a corrupt Kangeroo [sic] court".

Farage decided not to attend the by-election count after he said that Essex police advised him that there was an "organised campaign to disrupt and degrade the result". A party spokesperson claimed the force had "advised Nigel not to attend the count" due to "a credible threat against him".

However, it is understood Essex police dispute telling Farage to stay away. They said in a statement: "We have a proportionate and robust policing operation to ensure the safety and security of all participants at the count."

It was neglect, not Farage, that won Clacton, Fraser Nelson, page 25
Concerns about his financial affairs remain, leading article, page 29
My Week, Nigel Farage*, page 38

Farage arriving to cast his vote in Clacton on Thursday

Those daring to dream the MP for Clacton is finished are mistaken

Patrick Maguire
Comment

Today is the beginning of a new era for Nigel Farage and Reform UK. Already a conventional definition of what that means has taken shape, and it looks like this. Last week a member of his inner circle told me: "Nigel is back." To which his political opponents say: back, yes, but diminished. Farage can still weigh the votes in his heartlands, but even there — even in Clacton! — there is a highly motivated bloc of voters who wish to take him down a peg or two. Nearly 10,000 of them went out on the second Thursday in August to cast their ballots for a man with a bin on his head.

How humiliating, these critics say. To win 63 per cent of the vote on a 44 per cent turnout was comfortable enough, yes, but worse than the 75 per cent projected by the polls. Not even Rupert Lowe nor Zack Polanski took the bait and, as a consequence, Farage must feel as silly as he looks. Surely his refusal to attend the count or give a major speech yesterday proves that much?

But the fact is that Farage increased both his vote share and raw number of votes on 2024. Data is the fuel of modern politics and Reform has stockpiled more of it than anyone else. Now they believe that Farage is "untouchable" in his own seat. That he could do this after months of unrelenting scrutiny from the media suggests they are right. And so, come the next election, he will feel liberated to tour the country safe in the knowledge that Clacton will vote for him whatever. They did so this time despite the £5 million and despite Posh George.

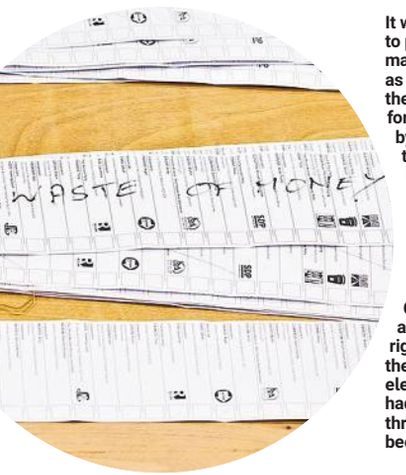
Those questions and controversies have not disappeared into the ballot box. The parliamentary standards inquiry is back under way. But we now know what will happen when it gives its verdict. Farage appeared to concede that it could rule against him, when he said that, perhaps, he had "maybe" neglected to "fill in a piece of paper" and declare his millions from Christopher Harborne. It doesn't matter much electorally now, anyway. On these numbers, should he be suspended from the Commons, Farage will be recalled and then he will win again.

Thus begins a new era of conscientious objection to mainstream politics itself. The very fact of this by-election, with its appeal to popular will over process, told us that much. Farage has unburdened himself of the conventions by which everyone else abides. Go to the count? No thanks. I'll address a festival of my supporters instead. Submit myself to endless questioning about my finances? No way.

There's a reason Reform is looking to move more and more of its communications away from legacy media, including, this reporter understands, with its own online TV channel. It's the same reason it will announce a new team of spokespeople from outside politics at its conference next month, and the reason at least one Reform MP, facing their own unhelpful questions from the media, is now considering calling a by-election themselves.

Last year, having unexpectedly emerged as Britain's government-in-waiting, Reform sought establishment credibility and found they did not much like it. Now, as they enter a new phase, they are deliberately breaking every one of its rules, subverting its expectations. It's not a 35 per cent strategy nationally. Perhaps they'll never get back to 30 per cent. But in places like Clacton, it's still a winning proposition. That suggests our electoral map has changed rather less than some of Farage's rivals are daring to dream.

JOE GIDDENS/PA; DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES



It was a struggle to photograph as many candidates as possible at the declaration for the Clacton by-election, triggered by Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform UK. Challengers included the Loony Party, far left, and Count Binface aka Jon Harvey, right. Some of the ballot papers election workers had to sort through had been spoilt, left

Count Binface and a victor who could not face the count

Reform leader partied until 7am but issue of his finances lingers, write **Steven Swinford** and **Aubrey Allegretti**

The "Farage Fest" started shortly before midnight and went on until 7am. The Reform UK leader and his top team spent the early hours of Friday partying at an airfield near Clacton, and no expense had been spared.

Those arriving were greeted by a 40ft-wide poster of a grinning Nigel Farage with the slogan, "Welcome to Clacton". There was an outdoor disco with a DJ, a band and a ferris wheel, as well as giant games of Jenga and Connect 4. There was a free bar, and yurts and tents laid on so people could spend the night.

More than 500 people, including hundreds of constituents, attended what Farage called a thank you to the people of Clacton. He had a go on the ferris wheel, saying: "We're only here once, we've got to have fun."

He gave a defiant victory speech at 3am. The political establishment, he said, "paint us out to be criminals and bad people every day" and had decided to use "foul means" to try to beat him. The people of Clacton, he said, were his jury and they had "stuck two fingers up to the entire political establishment".

And that was the extent of his victory lap. He did not attend the count, saying he had been told by Essex police that there was an "organised campaign to disrupt and degrade the result". A Reform UK spokesman said there was a "credible threat" against him and that he had been advised not to attend — a claim rejected by the police.

Farage cancelled a press conference scheduled for Friday morning, deciding that he had said all he needed to say. Aides said that he needed to rest after campaigning relentlessly for six weeks, in a by-election of his own making.

His decision to call the by-election did not go as planned. He triggered it by resigning as scrutiny grew of his finances, particularly a £5 million gift from Christopher Harborne, a British-Thai cryptocurrency billionaire.

Reform argues that the by-election has been a chance to get back on the front foot. Farage was ridiculed after he triggered the by-election when all the other parties pulled out, leaving Count Binface as his main opponent. Labour mocked him for "spending his summer arguing with a bin".

Reform points out that Farage won 63 per cent of the vote, more than in the general election, and that the turnout was 44 per cent. The pollster Professor Sir John Curtice said the scale of the turnout was evidence that although opposition parties saw the election as a farce, the people of Clacton did not.

Farage believes this alone is evidence that his gamble has paid off. But his victory is also intended to spike the guns of those he believes are intent on defenestrating him. If it comes to a by-election, he will win. In this context, the by-election was an attempt to frame the narrative for the battle to come, a formal investigation by the parliamentary authorities into the £5 million gift from Harborne.

"Six weeks ago we were drowning in sleaze," one ally said. "He couldn't move without the £5 million being mentioned. We needed our own version of a circuit breaker and this is it. It was a gamble but it has paid off."

For all the fighting talk, though, the investigation now continues. Within a few hours of Farage's victory, Daniel Greenberg, the parliamentary commissioner for standards, confirmed that he was resuming his investigation into whether Farage should have declared the "gift" from Harborne.

Farage is furious that the existence of the gift has entered the public domain. He received it in April 2024, before he changed his mind and decided to stand at the general election. It remained a secret until April this year, when The Guardian revealed its existence.

The rules say that "purely personal gifts or benefits" from family, or commercial loans, do not usually need to be registered. However, they also say "the possible motive of the giver and the use to which the gift is put" should be considered, adding: "If there is any doubt, the gift should be registered."

In other words, perception matters. Critics say a gift from a cryptocurrency billionaire shows a potential conflict of interest, given that Farage is a strong advocate for deregulating cryptocurrency. Farage denies this. He appears to have been aware of the potential for controversy when he received the money. He signed an agreement drawn up by lawyers with Harborne, making explicit that it was a gift.

Ever since the gift emerged, he has been on the defensive. He told LBC Radio in June that it was "not any of your business", adding: "It's an unconditional gift. I can spend it on Ferraris if I want. That'd be entirely up to me. I can do what I want with it."

Some of his own supporters are concerned about the tone. Tim Montgomerie, a broadcaster and backer of Reform UK, said yesterday: "This is a good result for Nigel Farage. He's been the winsome happy warrior of old on the sun-soaked streets of Clacton during the campaign. He should be on every TV screen this morning, underlining his win, and with that cheeky, trademark smile on his face. Being the Nigel that so many voters like the idea of hanging out with in a pub.

"But this recently far too dominant aggrieved tone is still with us. It's not good. You don't skip your own victory count without a much better explanation. Anger from politicians can work, but only if it's on behalf of others — not yourself. He's distracting from his victory. Puzzling."

The problem for Farage is that the standards investigation is likely to be protracted. The Times has been told that it may go on until the autumn.

In an interview with GB News on Friday, Farage conceded that he may have failed to register the gift, but said he was "confident I'm right".

Farage and his allies are already on the offensive, taking a leaf out of the playbook Boris Johnson used when he was investigated over the Downing Street parties scandal. Arron Banks, a close ally of Farage, derided the standards committee as a "kangaroo court". Farage has said there is "no objectivity" in the process.

Farage and his allies believe the by-election has settled the issue of his finances. The challenge he faces is that the process is only getting started.

Win can't mask party's mounting problems

John Curtice
Comment

It is no surprise that Nigel Farage won the Clacton by-election. Even if the main parties had stood, he would still have been expected to win more than 50 per cent of the vote in one of the most pro-Brexit constituencies in the country.

Despite competition from a record 33 other candidates, he won just over 1,000 more votes than in 2024. In any event, Clacton has mattered.

In calling the by-election Farage hoped to cock a snook at an establishment he feels is trying to bring him and his party down via allegations about financial contributions to himself and his party. In practice, his decision was followed by an immediate fall in his party's support, just when its year-long lead in the polls was under threat.

Reform UK's dramatic rise in the number of people saying they would vote for the party in a general election peaked at an average of 32 per cent last September. Since then, its standing has declined, although there was a reversal after its success in this May's local elections. By the beginning of last month it was down to 27 per cent.

A somewhat revived Labour is not Reform's only problem. Rupert Lowe's Restore Britain is snapping at its heels, winning 7 per cent in the Makerfield by-election won by Burnham and 9 per cent in the Manchester mayoral ballot.

However, what Reform perhaps has to fear most is the nascent revival of the Conservative Party. At 20 per cent, support for Kemi Badenoch's party is three points up on its nadir last autumn. Instead of trailing Reform by 15 points, the Tories are just four points adrift.

Sir John Curtice is professor of politics at the University of Strathclyde and senior research fellow at the National Centre for Social Research

Nigel Farage denies link to crypto conspiracist

Tom Ball, Sian Norris
George Greenwood

A "personal friend" and former business partner of Nigel Farage was an influential figure in a conspiracy-based cryptocurrency group that was accused of scamming investors out of thousands of pounds.

John Mappin, a Scientologist and proponent of the QAnon hoax, promoted Awoke Coin several times on his social media channels, encouraging his followers to invest in the "anti-woke" digital currency.

Mappin, 61, is the owner of Camelot Castle hotel in Cornwall, where he has hosted the Reform leader. The two were also briefly business partners in a Scientology-linked carbon-offsetting company to which Mappin introduced Farage.

The hotelier is a supporter of the Russian government and corresponds with senior figures in President Putin's regime, including Kirill Dmitriev, who has been leading negotiations with the US over Ukraine.

Mappin, who was educated at Winchester and is a scion of the Mappin and Webb jewellery family, was found in 2002 to have duped Benjamin Pell into handing over £77,500 to finance a bogus Hollywood blockbuster about his life.

A joint investigation by The Times and OpenDemocracy raises questions about Farage's decision to associate with Mappin, as controversy continues about the Reform UKs allies. Leaked messages show that Mappin was an active participant in a Telegram group that launched Awoke Coin and co-ordinated its promotion, as well as in a wider group for investors that at its peak had more than 2,000 members.

Mappin joined the groups shortly after the launch of Awoke in 2024 and declared that his family were holders of the coin. Investors welcomed his arrival, describing him as a "huge political figure" whose connections could benefit their movement.

The group encouraged members to invest tranches of $2,500 into a cryptocurrency wallet linked to the coin. A Times analysis showed that a number of transactions in these amounts were paid into the wallet, which were then transferred out of it to unknown third parties, through services that can make it hard to follow the money trail. In August 2025, the coin reached a market cap of almost $6 million (£4.45 million) but a month later it collapsed to $25,000, leading to allegations from members that the project had been a "rug-pull" scam, in which individuals hype a new digital token to attract investors and then withdraw all the funds or sell off their own holdings.

"Many people in here lost thousands of dollars," wrote one angry member in the group for investors. "This was a rug," wrote another. Mappin had exited the Telegram group days before the collapse of the coin's value.

In response to questions from The Times, Mappin said that though he was a member of the Telegram group, he "had no role whatsoever in the management, decision-making or operation of the project." He said his reason for joining had been a "curiosity about this as a cultural phenomenon", and that he had "no involvement in any scheme designed to defraud investors. Nor did I profit from any such scheme as I was unaware of one." He said that "any attempt to link the timing of my departure to subsequent events is pure speculation and without foundation."

For a man running a hotel for a living, Mappin is unusually well-connected in the international politics. In 2017, he met President Trump at a Republican National Committee fundraising event in Washington.

A year later, he and his Kazakh wife Irina were involved in setting up Turning Point UK, a right-wing youth movement also supported by Farage and the Duke of Marlborough.

In 2021, Mappin introduced Farage to Dutch Green Business, a carbon-offsetting company in which he and Irina held a 30 per cent stake. All key figures were linked to Scientology. Farage was granted £1 million share options and became chair of the advisory board. But a few months later his position was put on hold owing to a dispute between the board of directors and Mappin and his wife.

The pair have since attended events together, including a 2022 dinner with Eva Vlaardingerbroek, a far-right influencer banned from entering the UK due to her extremist views. In May 2025 they attended a VE Day celebration at the Turf Club in London, along with the Duke of Marlborough.

A spokesman for Farage said: "Mr Mappin is not a close friend nor ally of Mr Farage ... he left the party a long time ago and is now a member of another political party. To suggest anything else would be an outright lie. However, we have come to expect nothing less than lies from The Times."

Nigel Farage with John Mappin, far left, the Duke of Marlborough, far right, and a war veteran at the Turf Club in London

Gambling website linked to George Cottrell shuts down

George Greenwood

The crypto-gambling site in which the convicted fraudster and secret Nigel Farage funder George Cottrell was said to be a "key player" has shut down.

Visitors to the website of tether.bet, a Montenegro-based high-stakes gambling firm, have been greeted by a message confirming that the business has ceased trading.

"We are sorry to announce that the tether.bet brand is no longer operating, and customers can no longer access their accounts through this URL," the message read. "If you hold a balance, please submit a withdrawal request to the address above."

In July, a Sunday Times Insight investigation reported that middlemen had facilitated tether.bet gambling to high-end UK customers by directing them to deposit money in two British companies, potentially constituting breaches of gambling law.

Revelations about the extent of Cottrell's gambling activity continue to emerge. The FT reported yesterday that Cottrell had a secret account at Polymarket, a cryptocurrency-based "prediction market".

The account, it said, had received $18 million in cryptocurrency to place bets on Donald Trump winning the US presidential election, at a time when he was providing gifts and benefits to the Reform UK leader. According to the paper the net profit was $11.5 million.

After the result on November 6, 2024, the account paid out $29.5 million in 29 separate transfers to the crypto exchange Binance.

The account on the prediction market platform — under the name @zxgngl — was opened on October 9, 2024, using an email address belonging to Cottrell, according to a document seen by the FT.

A lawyer representing Cottrell told the paper that his Polymarket betting activity "has been conducted entirely on his own behalf, from his own funds, and in full compliance with the [know your client] requirements of that platform".

Last year, Cottrell was cited in a High Court claim alleging that betting accounts in his name had previously been used by other gamblers to place wagers worth millions of dollars.

The claim alleged that Cottrell allowed accounts he owned or controlled to be used by a professional betting syndicate, and that profits were shared between him and other participants.

The High Court claim did not allege that the arrangement was unlawful, instead describing it as a commercial arrangement. Cottrell's lawyer told the FT the claims were allegations in a case to which his client was not a party.

Reform claims Cottrell has no formal role in the party, despite him giving out party-branded business cards with his name and Farage's email address.

This week, Cottrell moved his company's address to the same building as Reform's headquarters. Cottrell has repeatedly been seen at the building. A source in the offices said he was "seemingly unfussed about being spotted".

Reform said that the party did not share an office space with Cottrell, and the tower was a "huge building" with "plenty of office free space to rent".

for VE Day last year. Mappin, a supporter of President Putin's regime, has hosted the Reform leader at his hotel in Cornwall

Villagers battle migrant camps near schools

Constance Kampfner
Political Correspondent

Two former army bases in which the government plans to house thousands of asylum seekers are both within a mile of primary schools.

Ministers plan to convert disused military sites in Oxfordshire, North Yorkshire and Suffolk into asylum accommodation to reduce reliance on hotels, despite Home Office guidance that asylum accommodation should not be near nurseries or schools.

This week Andy Burnham defended the plans, saying that more affluent areas of the UK must "play their part".

Up to 1,200 male asylum seekers may move into a former flight training school in Linton-on-Ouse, North Yorkshire, creating a ratio of six men to each woman in the village of 600.

A primary school, nursery and play area lie less than a mile away from RAF Linton-on-Ouse, which was attended by Prince William during his military training in 2008.

Malcolm Taylor, a North Yorkshire councillor, told The Times: "It's quite an attractive site, it's not one of your austere former military sites and it's right in the heart of the village. So as a consequence, it's right adjacent to the school, the play park ... That's what has really ramped up the concerns of the community."

Plans to convert RAF Barnham, near Thetford in west Suffolk, into accommodation for up to 1,250 asylum seekers have also caused consternation.

John Bauer, chairman of Barnham parish council, said that parents were considering removing their children from Barnham School because of its proximity to the site, which could put the school's long-term viability at risk.

Last month, the Home Office published guidance on housing asylum seekers, ruling out new-builds and homes that could be seen as luxurious.

Sir Alec Shelbrooke, Conservative MP for Wetherby & Easingwold, asked the home secretary, Shabana Mahmood, if she would rule out the Linton-on-Ouse site because of its "proximity to the primary school", describing the location as "inappropriate".

Mahmood replied: "No decision has been taken, and all these factors, including other community assets, such as schools and community facilities, are taken into account."

A third former military base under consideration, near the village of Piddington, near Bicester, is not near a school but is adjacent to a play area.

Anna Turley, the minister for border security and asylum, has defended the proposal, saying that migrants will have services on site. "They're not going to be in the village," she told LBC. "Everything they need will be on that site."

Labour has been accused of "bypassing" local communities by using an "urgent" planning process for the Bicester and Barnham sites under which the Home Office has submitted the applications directly to Angela Rayner, the housing secretary, rather than to the local planning authorities.

The fast-track approach is being used because the sites are deemed to be in the national interest, but Labour, Liberal Democrat and Tory MPs with constituencies near the bases are concerned that it is undemocratic.

Burnham has said he will look at the plan to house 3,750 asylum seekers on the three sites, which was announced by the previous government in June. He said he was "prepared always to listen to people, to work with people and to pick up legitimate concerns".

The Home Office said: "We are seeking to fairly house asylum seekers across the country, working closely with local authorities to reduce the on communities. This means closing every asylum hotel while moving asylum seekers into alternative accommodation, including former military sites. It also means reducing the number in asylum accommodation. The number receiving support is now falling, and asylum costs are down by £1 billion since the general election."

Currie defends plea to provide brothel for asylum seekers

Ed Halford

A former Conservative minister has defended her suggestion that there should be "a brothel" in an Oxfordshire village set to host 1,200 asylum seekers.

Edwina Currie, a former health minister, was asked on Times Radio for her opinion on whether it is right that affluent areas and rural areas should take their fair share of migrants. As part of her response, Currie said: "The obvious thing that 1,200 young men are going to need in a village like little Piddington is a brothel. I don't think they're going to provide that. I have a feeling that is not going to be allowed."

After the broadcast, she told The Times that "many of the single young men I know are very interested in sex" and "if I remember rightly, a long time ago, 50 odd years ago, I was too".

The 79-year-old has faced a fierce backlash from women's rights activists for suggesting that sex workers should be on hand for asylum seekers.

However, she continued to defend the comments: "Wherever you put 1,200 young men from all over the world, there are going to be problems.

"The charities that think that all you need to do is provide SIM cards for their phones and a sports pitch are really being very naive. This will cause problems whether it goes into a city, into a town, into a rural area."

When asked about her suggestion that brothels be opened in places that are close to where asylum seekers live, Currie said she was "making slightly facetiously a serious point". Currie emphasised that she was not using "brothels" as a practical idea but as a "stark example of the pressure that creating new camps will bring on the local people".

A Conservative source told The Times: "These comments do not reflect the view of the party."

Currie criticised the Labour government for not taking necessary steps, as "they are still committed to human rights legislation that puts the rights of individuals way above the needs of the community".

When drawn on different cultural norms in relation to sex and consent, Currie said: "Let's just remind ourselves that one of the most notorious grooming gang leaders is over 70, has been in the UK for so long the current law doesn't apply to him."

Edwina Currie spoke out on plans to put 1,200 young arrivals in Piddington village

Currie was making reference to Shabir Ahmed, the Rochdale grooming gang leader who was jailed for multiple counts of rape and sexual offences against girls in 2012. She said: "It's not just recent arrivals. If you take 1,000, 1,200 young men of any culture, any creed, and give them nothing to do, you're asking for trouble."

On X, Jo Marshall, a women's rights activist, called Currie's comments "appalling". She wrote: "Whether she was joking or not, suggesting that 1,200 young male asylum seekers in a village like Piddington 'need a brothel' is an utter disgrace. It treats women's bodies as a public convenience to soothe male frustration, which is pure demeaning contempt for women."

Julie Bindel, the co-founder of Justice for Women, which supports women who have fought back against or killed violent male partners, called Currie's comments a "ridiculous contribution". She wrote in The Telegraph: "Edwina Currie has acknowledged the problems likely to arise in that particular rural area as a result of a huge influx of unaccompanied men — then suggests a solution that would give them permission to behave exactly as their critics complain that they will."

She added: "Offering up poor, desperate women to service gangs of men is an outrageous suggestion."

Andy Burnham, the prime minister, recently suggested that wealthier areas should take more asylum seekers.

In Piddington, an Oxfordshire village with a population of about 350, residents voiced concerns that plans for asylum seekers to be housed in a nearby disused Ministry of Defence storage depot could cause trouble. Many women in the area said they would not feel safe to walk alone at night.

The Home Office said: "We are working to fairly house asylum seekers across the country, working closely with local authorities and listening to their concerns to reduce the impact on communities. This means closing every asylum hotel and moving asylum seekers into alternative accommodation, including former military sites."

Feedback, Domesday village, page 30

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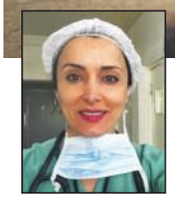
A man carries a wounded child into the MSF-run clinic at Rafah Indonesian Field Hospital in southern Gaza. Photograph © MSF



DR BIRSEN GASKELL IS AN ANAESTHETIST WHO WORKED IN GAZA.

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We immediately got to work at the hospital. We treated a large number of patients for burns and trauma injuries, mostly people who'd been injured in explosions. There were a lot of children. I'd never seen so many burns patients in one place.

Some children were malnourished, and it was clear many were not eating properly. With post-operative care, it's vital that patients have a good diet to assist with tissue healing, but due to food shortages that just wasn't happening.

We were seeing around 180 patients every day. We didn't have the capacity to take everybody into the operating theatres – some procedures had to be carried out on the ward.

As an anaesthetist, one of my roles was to improve pain management. Due to shortages of medical supplies, there have been a lot of incidents during this conflict when people have been operated on without anaesthetics. It's inconceivable that this has happened, but it has.

Some patients stick in your mind. There was a nine-year-old girl who'd been injured when her home was bombed and lost part of her jaw. She and her mother were the only survivors from their family. I changed her dressing every few days and gave her antibiotic treatment. One day, she gave me a hug and asked if she'd ever look normal. I didn't have an answer for her. Reconstructive surgery would really help her, but nothing like that is on offer in Gaza.

The situation in Gaza is getting worse and people's medical needs are growing. The fact that there are people there who have had to undergo medical procedures without anaesthesia is barbaric. It's an inhumane situation.

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MSFR0048

Maternity deserts leave women fearing prospect of roadside births

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor
Matilda Davies, Oisin Cahalane

Lucinda Bass is due to give birth to her first child, a baby boy, in October. She lives in the tiny hamlet of Kentisbury in rural Devon, and was excited to have her baby at the North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple, a 15 minute drive away.

This week, however, Bass was among hundreds of pregnant women plunged into uncertainty when the NHS shut down maternity services at the hospital, saying that staffing shortages mean it "cannot safely provide medical cover". Her closest maternity unit is now in Exeter, a two hour drive away.

"It is added anxiety on top of what is already a very anxious time," said Bass, 41, who has a high-risk pregnancy. "On a good day, with no holiday traffic, it takes an hour and 40 minutes to get to Exeter."

The roads in the county are often gridlocked with holidaymakers, farm traffic or car accidents leading to fears that women in labour will not get to hospital in time, putting them and their babies at risk.

Doctors at the north Devon hospital's emergency department have been given a "crash course" in birth emergencies because of concerns women will end up there.

"People are concerned about giving birth on the side of the road without any medical support, or about what happens in an emergency," said Bass.

Analysis by The Times showed that long and anxious journeys to give birth were increasingly a reality for women in England. Over the past decade, 31 maternity units closed and "maternity deserts" developed in the South West, East of England and Northumberland. NHS leaders said staffing shortages and more complicated births had made it hard for smaller maternity units to remain "viable", leading to closures "with increasing frequency".

Angharad White, with her husband Dave and their two children, and Lucinda Bass, inset, with her partner Chris Ince, are anxious about having to face long journeys while in the throes of labour

The Royal Devon NHS Trust is trying to recruit more obstetric consultants by offering "golden hello" bonuses, so that the unit in Barnstaple can reopen in the coming months.

Until then, women face an uncertain and stressful wait, with some considering unassisted free births at home or planning to spend thousands on accommodation so they can relocate to Exeter close to their due date.

Angharad White, 35, is pregnant with her third child, having given birth to her first two babies at the hospital in Barnstaple, which is a 15 minute drive from her home. She said the closure of the maternity unit was "a huge loss to our community" that posed significant safety risks. "In an emergency I would be more than an hour away from care, for many emergencies that is just too long. I have had complicated deliveries before. My last baby was born quite quickly and I had a significant haemorrage."

White is anxious about the prospect of a long drive to Exeter "in the throes of labour". She said: "The roads that we rely on in north Devon aren't reliable. I'm due in early December, when the roads can be completely iced over."

Analysis showed that more than 118,000 people in England live more than 20 miles from a maternity unit as the crow flies. Mothers in several towns in north Northumberland, including Berwick-upon-Tweed, must travel 30 miles to the closest maternity unit this side of the border, a midwifery-led unit at Alnwick. To get consultant-led care, which is essential for high-risk pregnancies, women have to travel for 57 miles to Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital. Those in Bainbridge, in the Yorkshire Dales, face an hour-long, 35-mile drive to the closest maternity unit in Darlington.

The South West is the most isolated part of the country. The 2,000 people living in the Isles of Scilly are more than 48 miles from the nearest maternity unit — the furthest of anywhere in England — where there is one midwife based at a single birthing room in St Mary's Birth Centre. Many patients, including those expecting complex or high-risk births, are advised to travel to the Royal Cornwall Hospital on the mainland to give birth.

Women in England are able to choose where to give birth, but many have no highly-rated units in their areas. Nearly half a million people live more than 40 miles from a maternity unit rated "good" or "outstanding" by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

While the south east and London have multiple highly-rated units, residents in St Ives in Cornwall are more than 140 miles away from the nearest maternity ward rated "good".

In the southeast, more than half of the units are rated as either "good" or "outstanding", but in the East of England, just one of 16 is rated above "requires improvement". This region is also home to Basildon University Hospital in Essex, which has an overall "inadequate" rating.

Matthew Hopkins, acute and ambulance director at the NHS Alliance, said: "Workforce shortages and rising intervention rates are placing significant strain on maternity services, particularly in smaller units with fewer than 2,000 births a year. C-section rates, for example, are increasing demand for beds, theatre capacity and specialist staff.

"Unless we address these structural challenges and support clinically sustainable service changes, we are likely to see more situations similar to that in Barnstaple. NHS leaders need to be supported to take the difficult decisions that will lead to improvements in safety and ensure services remain viable in the long term."

Sam Higginson, chief executive at Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, said: "This decision was not taken lightly. It has been made following a thorough review of our medical staffing, but this has shown a significant shortage of obstetric medical staff over the next few weeks.

"We've therefore taken the difficult decision to suspend the service. This is a temporary suspension."

British cycling star, 19, dies after crash during race in Portugal

Sean Russell

A rising star of British cycling aged 19 has died after a collision with a car during the Volta a Portugal.

Portugal's RTP broadcaster said Finlay Tarling was hit by a non-race car driving in the opposite direction.

Tarling, the younger brother of the Netcompany-Ineos rider Josh Tarling, was born in Ffos-y-ffin, Wales.

Race organisers and the Portuguese Cycling Federation confirmed the news after stage eight was neutralised and the podium ceremony cancelled out of respect for the NSN Development Team rider. Tarling joined NSN Development, a team that develops under-23 riders with an eye on moving them to the top-tier World Tour, in 2025 and looked to be following in his brother's footsteps when it came to racing against the clock.

After starting at the small Dutch team Willebrord Wil Vooruit, he had taken numerous time-trial wins at the club level before stepping up to under-23 with NSN, co-owned by the former Barcelona football star Andrés Iniesta. The stage was a 167km route from Melgaco to Fafe, which is north of Porto on the west coast of Portugal.

A statement from the race organisers read: "The organization ... deeply regrets to announce the passing of British cyclist Finlay Tarling ... following a serious accident ... At this moment of profound dismay, the organisation of the Volta a Portugal and the Portuguese Cycling Federation express their most heartfelt condolences to the family of Finlay Tarling, to his teammates, to the NSN Development Team, and to all his friends and loved ones.

"In light of this tragic event, the race will be neutralized until reaching Fafe and, as a sign of respect and mourning, the podium ceremony ... will not take place."

Finlay Tarling collided with a non-race car

Tarling was hoping to follow his brother into the World Tour and was having a good season for the lower-level Continental team, taking second place on stage six of the Tour du Rwanda and third in the National Championship Time Trial. Last year, he lined up at the Tour of Britain for the British National Team alongside Ben Wiggins, the son of Bradley. Last year, Tarling raced for NSN at the Tour of Britain, where he was excited to finish in Cardiff in what was the Welsh Tour de France winner Geraint Thomas's final race. "It'll be racing against some of the best riders in the world and on Geraint Thomas's final race as a pro rider. It's a surreal feeling, but we'll all have great emotions," he said ahead of stage five.

His team said: "Our deepest condolences go out to Fin's parents Michael and Dawn, his brother Josh, and everyone lucky enough to call Fin a friend. Rest in peace, Fin."

JONNY GIOS/BAV MEDIA

Costing a bomb A US air force F15E Strike Eagle training over the Lake District. It costs $19,000 an hour to run, and can reach Mach 2.5 and carry 23,000lb of ordnance

Charges over jail attack on father of dead girl, 10

Two men have been charged with attempted murder after the father of the murdered schoolgirl Sara Sharif was attacked in prison.

Steven Sansom, 47, and Adam Watson, 39, are accused of trying to kill Urfan Sharif at Belmarsh Prison on New Year's Day last year.

The Crown Prosecution Service said they were due to appear at Westminster magistrates' court on August 26.

It is understood the charges relate to an incident in which Sharif was allegedly ambushed in a cell at the category A prison.

Daren Streeter, deputy chief crown prosecutor at CPS London, said: "Our prosecutors have worked closely with the Metropolitan Police to establish that there is sufficient evidence to bring the case to court and pursue criminal proceedings."

The Metropolitan Police previously said officers were investigating "an allegation that a prisoner was assaulted at Belmarsh", and that "the 43-year-old suffered non life-threatening injuries".

The Sun reported that Sharif had cuts to his neck and face and received medical treatment inside the prison.

Sharif and Sara's stepmother, Beinash Batool, 30, were jailed for life in December for the 10-year-old's murder after years of horrific "torture" and "despicable" abuse.

The court was told that Sara suffered "unimaginable pain, misery and anxiety" as she was repeatedly beaten, burnt, bitten and restrained at the family home in Woking, Surrey.

Sharif was handed a minimum term of 40 years and Batool, 33 years.

Migrant mega-boats made in China

Richard Spencer China Correspondent
Emma Yeomans News Reporter

The grey inflatable boats are stacked neatly in the carpark. At 12 metres long, they are said to hold 15 to 20 people. A smart smuggler can pack in 80.

The dinghies, advertised by a Chinese supplier, are not the largest to cross the Channel. Last week, a "mega-dinghy", measuring at least 15 metres, carried 230 people from France to Britain, prompting fears that smugglers may have found new ways to evade interception.

The overall number of small boat crossings this year has dropped by more than 40 per cent compared with the same time last year, as fewer migrants enter Europe and more boats are detected and intercepted in France before they reach the beaches.

Nonetheless dinghy manufacturers in China told The Times that they could sell huge inflatable boats "as normal" and one admitted their products may be used by people smugglers.

The manufacturers are the first step in a supply chain stretching from China's east coast to the northern beaches of France. The government hit one company with sanctions and seized boats as they were shipped from China to European countries.

But it has not stopped other factories producing the inflatables and advertising them through marketplaces such as Alibaba, with descriptions like "Europe Popular Customized Size 30-40 Person Inflatable Pontoon Boat". The descriptions match the specifications of boats arriving in Britain, including flimsy floors made of sheet plastic or plywood, and the National Crime Agency (NCA) has intercepted shipments of small boats destined for Germany via Turkey.

Chinese companies said they were continuing to sell to the European market without any interference from the authorities. One woman, who asked that she be called only "Jane" and spoke to The Times on condition that her company was not identified, said her large rubber dinghies had no problems at customs.

She said she was aware that they might be used for migrant smuggling, but that they were not military products or subject to any other controls.

"This product was exported to Turkey five or six years ago," she said. "Since last year, we've been exporting it to Spain. They're all large boats, and they're also used for migrant smuggling, but Spain hasn't imposed any sanctions."

She was aware a company in the market had been subject to UK sanctions but it had not affected business. "We can export as normal," she said. "As long as they are for legitimate civilian purposes such as recreation, fishing or rescue, there are no restrictions on exports from China."

The dinghies on her company's website are up to ten metres in length and sold without any identifying labels.

"China would not impose sanctions [on Chinese companies]," she said.

A ten-metre boat could still net smugglers hundreds of thousands in profit. Migrants pay about €2,000 for a place, so a dinghy carrying 80 people would earn €160,000, minus the costs of the craft, engine and transport. On Alibaba, boats of that size or larger were sold for between $1,200 and $1,900.

"Della", a spokeswoman for Qingdao Haohai Boat Company, which also advertises large rubber dinghies on Alibaba, said she had never heard of a company being penalised and could "legally export" their products.

"If you want it bigger, we can make it as big as you want," she said. "Chinese people can do anything. The barrier to entry for the inflatable boat industry is relatively low, so there are many manufacturers and intense price competition."

People smugglers import 12m-long inflatable dinghies from China before packing them with up to 80 migrants

Weihai Yamar Outdoors Product Co, the company sanctioned by the UK last year, said it could no longer do overseas business as its US dollar bank account at the Agricultural Bank of China had been frozen.

Chen Xue, the general manager, said the reason given for the sanctions was that her company had advertised lifeboats and boats for migrants online. "That is completely fabricated," she said. "We have never exported any boats to the UK."

Rob Jones, the NCA's director-general of operations, said the agency's increased work targeting supply chains was a "key contributory factor" in the reduction in small boat crossings this year. He said: "We are making it more difficult and costlier for organised crime groups to source equipment, more difficult to get it to the beaches, more difficult to communicate with potential customers, and generally more difficult for them to operate without coming into contact with law enforcement.

"Our message to the gangs is clear — moving people in small boats and supplying equipment gets riskier for you by the day, and we will not stop in our pursuit of you, wherever you are and wherever you operate."

On a visit to Beijing in January, Sir Keir Starmer, then the prime minister, signed an accord with the Chinese authorities to stop the trade in boats and engines to smugglers from the country's factories, mostly on the east coast.

Believe it: the young are grumpier than pensioners

Andrew Ellson
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

The grumpy old man has been a fixture of popular culture for generations, with men of a certain vintage considered willing to complain about almost everything from the weather to the price of a pint.

It may be time, however, to reassess that view. Research suggests that the older men get, the less grumpy they become — and it is the young who are actually hardest to please.

HappyOrNot, whose terminals sit in shopping centres, airports and other venues, analysed more than one million customer interactions to find out who was the most likely to hit the green smiley face button and who was most likely to hit the angry red-faced button.

The results showed that young people were notably more likely to rate their experience badly than older generations.

In retail stores, for example, only 8 per cent of male shoppers aged 65 and older gave negative feedback compared with 17 per cent of 15 to 24-year-olds. The same pattern emerges in healthcare settings, where only 7 per cent of male pensioners hit the red button compared with 13 per cent of younger women and 17 per cent of younger men.

Overall, HappyOrNot found that both sexes became steadily more satisfied with their experiences as they aged.

Across all venues, 82.3 per cent of those aged 15 to 24 gave positive feedback, rising steadily through the generations to 91.5 per cent among those aged 65 and over. The difference between the sexes was much smaller: women were 2.3 percentage points more positive than men overall.

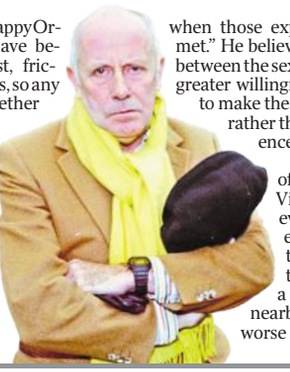
Popular culture has long encouraged the idea that advancing years bring with them an increasing tendency to grumble. In Britain, the archetype is perhaps Victor Meldrew, Richard Wilson's permanently exasperated pensioner in the BBC sitcom *One Foot in the Grave*, whose response to life's everyday irritations was frequently an incredulous: "I don't believe it!"

More recent examples include Carl Fredricksen, the cantankerous widower who ties thousands of balloons to his house in Pixar's animated film, *Up*, and Tom Hanks's irascible title character in *A Man Called Otto*. They follow in the footsteps of Statler and Waldorf, the two elderly hecklers from *The Muppet Show* who spend much of their time in a theatre box insulting the performers — and each other.

HappyOrNot suggested that the relative dissatisfaction of younger people could partly be explained by the standards they had come to expect from shopping online, where purchases can be made within seconds without queues, missing stock or an unhelpful assistant getting in the way. Scott Erickson, a vice-president at HappyOrNot, said: "Consumers have become accustomed to fast, frictionless online experiences, so any in-store pain points, whether that's long queues, poor customer service, unavailable stock or slow response times, are likely to feel more frustrating by comparison.

"As a result, younger shoppers may be quicker to express dissatisfaction when those expectations aren't met." He believes the difference between the sexes could reflect a greater willingness among men to make their feelings known rather than worse experiences.

The findings offer comfort to Victor Meldrews everywhere. However bad they think things are, there is probably a young person nearby having an even worse time.



Victor Meldrews can take comfort from the findings

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

It's all coming back to her

It is feared that political discourse is plumbing ever lower depths, but at least one minister knows how to reach for the stars. The victims minister Alex Davies-Jones, below, has revealed that, as a 12-year-old, her life very nearly took a different turn as she came close to being part of the kids pop group *S-Club Juniors*. This was the spinoff from S-Club 7 and Davies-Jones made it to the final 20 hopefuls, where she learnt how to do pieces to camera and so on. This knowledge is useful for her now, but it was what she did afterwards that proved more important. Davies-Jones toured Welsh pubs and clubs as a Celine Dion tribute act. She tells me: "If you can sing for a bunch of punters in a Welsh working men's club then you can definitely speak in the House of Commons."

Davies-Jones now demonstrates her talents in a different forum. She runs the parliamentary karaoke club, which has more than 80 MPs. That seems low for a group so infamously fond of their own voices, but top performers include Jess Phillips (who reportedly does a great Britney Spears) and the Gloucester MP Alex McIntyre (a peerless Frank Sinatra). Another member is the defence secretary Wes Streeting, who "never misses it", which must be delightful news for his new security detail. Still, at least some Labour figures have managed to strike the right note.

IT'S ON THE DRIVEWAY

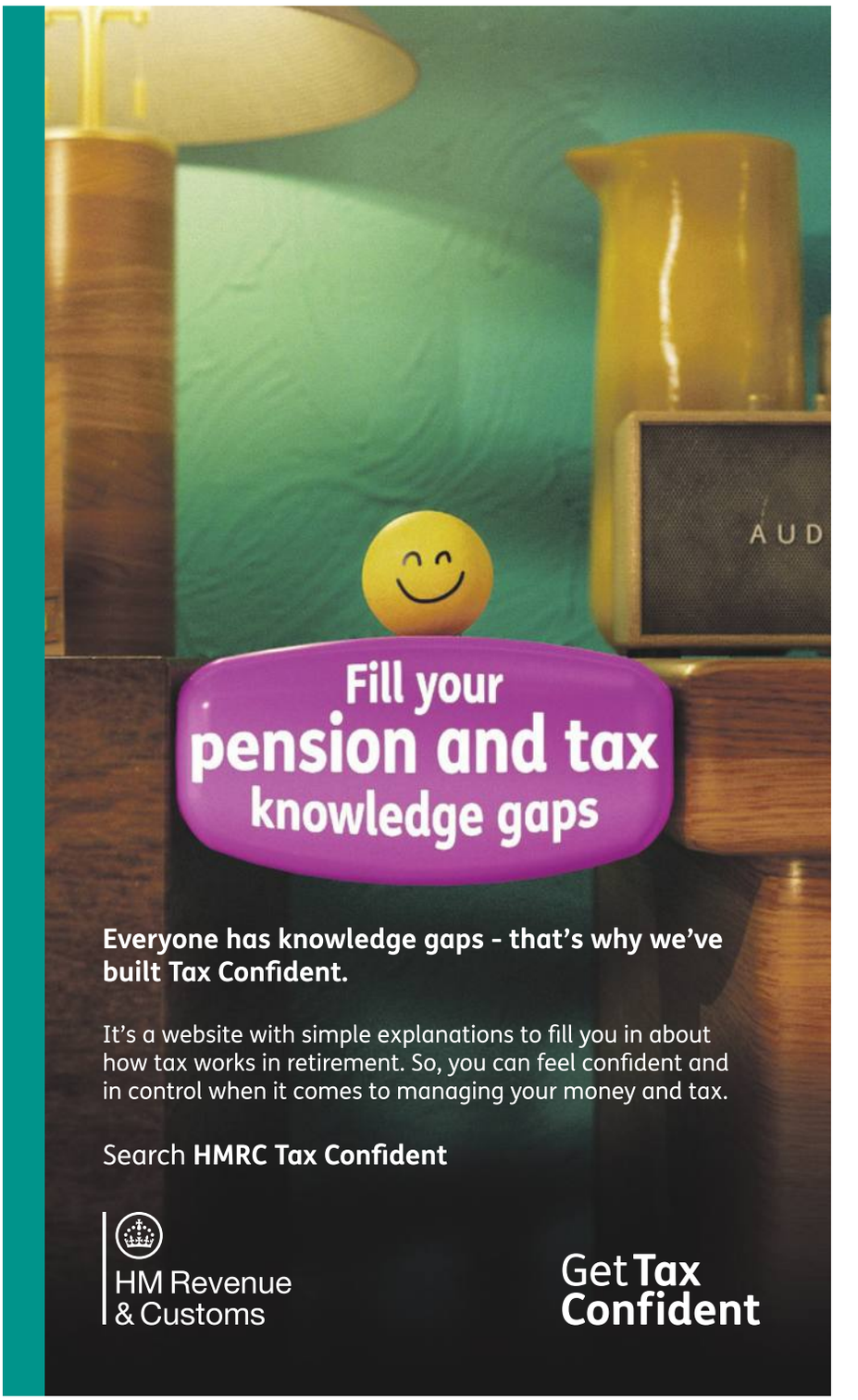
After publishing her memoir last year, the former Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon has decided to write a novel (one suspects that she will take easily to fiction). "When I wrote my memoir I decided, rightly or wrongly, that I wasn't going to use it to settle scores or be nasty to people," she told *All Talk* at the Edinburgh Fringe. "So that's what I'm going to do in my novel — a murder on every page." You can already imagine the scene where someone is found dead in a motorhome which the detective failed to notice.

There is a history of winners missing election counts and Nigel Farage's no-show at Clacton yesterday morning brought back memories of another East Anglian MP who skipped the speech. Back in 1970, the Tory Ernle Money did not expect to defeat the Labour incumbent Sir Dingle Foot and so he went to drown his sorrows as the votes were counted. Money was astonished when his election agent came in to say he had won by 13 votes, or he would have been had he not been completely insensible by that point. His agent was left to conjure an excuse. He told the hall: "Out of his deep respect for Sir Dingle, Mr Money felt it inappropriate to speak."

NO LAUGHING MATTER

There is disappointment among wonks who have been eagerly anticipating next month's Future of Cyber Security Conference in Manchester. One of the headline speakers was advertised as Paddy McGuinness, who was assumed to be the former deputy national security adviser, so imagine the punters' chagrin when an email announced that they were instead getting the TV comic. Many assumed this was a mistake, but organisers insist that the frontman of *Take Me Out* will be having a "fire-side chat" (surely that should be a "firewall-side chat"). One wonk tells me: "I am very curious to know what the former host of *Top Gear* has to say about cybersecurity". At least what that experience taught him about hard drives.

JACK BLACKBURN



News

Star turns drum up wave of US tourists

American music tourists have been flocking to Britain to splash their cash on gigs, attracted by sell-out stadium shows by superstar artists (Charlie Parker writes).

A record 2.1 million overseas visitors came to the UK to see a pop or rock concert last year, an increase of 27 per cent on 2024, according to data from UK Music. Stadium shows by Oasis, Beyoncé, Dua Lipa, Coldplay, Lana Del Rey and Kendrick Lamar helped to attract fans from across the pond, the industry body said.

Analysis by the national tourism agency VisitBritain, shared with The Times, found that about 440,000 of those travelling fans were likely to have been from the US, enough to fill up the O2 Arena in London 22 times.

A possible reason for the trend is that Americans tend to have deeper pockets than Britons. A typical full-time salary in the state of New York is $80,630 (£59,470) according to Forbes, while a full-time worker in Greater London earns £49,692 on average, according to ONS data. Tickets to see the same A-list artists in the US also tend to be far more expensive. The best VIP package for Harry Styles's record-breaking 12-night residency at Wembley Stadium this summer was said to be £725. By comparison, the most expensive package for his forthcoming 30-night residency at New York's Madison Square Garden is said to be £1,246.

Tom Kiehl, chief executive of UK Music, credited the boom in music tourism to "a growing trend for more stadium shows headlined with big acts and longer runs".

He added: "It's not just the big festivals like Glastonbury... there are a lot of different events that are attracting American tourists to see some of the biggest names in music here in the UK. If you think of events like Woodstock, Americans have had festivals for as long as the UK, but there is a unique feel to British festivals that attracts visitors from across the world."

The UK was the top European destination for Americans in 2025 and is expected to hold the title through to 2030.

The US is considered the largest and most valuable inbound visitor market, making up about 15 per cent of all tourist trips to the UK and about 21 per cent of all visitor spending.

Beyoncé fans outside her concert in London last year. Stadium shows by Taylor Swift, right, were also a big draw for Americans

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Graduate admits shooting boss of healthcare firm

Kelly Rissman New York

Luigi Mangione has admitted killing the UnitedHealthcare chief executive Brian Thompson in New York.

"I shot Mr Thompson in Manhattan," the Ivy League graduate told a judge at Manhattan federal court yesterday. "I knew what I was doing was illegal."

Mangione, 28, a software engineer from Maryland, shot Thompson, 50, twice outside the Hilton hotel on December 4, 2024. A six-day manhunt ensued before the killer was caught by police at a McDonald's in central Pennsylvania. A manifesto, allegedly written by Mangione, described health insurers as "parasites".

Pleading guilty to two federal stalking charges, Mangione said that he made a gun with a 3D printer and fitted it with a silencer. He said he posed as an investor in emails to UnitedHealthcare to gather information about a company conference. He will be sentenced on December 18 and faces a maximum sentence of life in prison. In a separate case due to go to trial next month, he is charged by the state of New York with murder. His lawyers have argued that the case should be dismissed on the basis that he cannot be tried twice for the same crime.

The killing of Thompson, who had two teenage sons, divided America and fuelled debate over the health insurance industry. UnitedHealth Group is the largest health insurer in America, worth more than $400 billion. Mangione achieved cult status online and was celebrated by parts of the anti-establishment left for his violent attack on corporate America. His mostly female fans, known as "Mangionistas", have often protested outside court against the injustice of his arrest. His guilty plea was met by cries of disbelief from his supporters.

Luigi Mangione in court in Manhattan

The hearing a federal court in lower Manhattan was attended by the Thompson family, including the health executive's mother Pat Thompson, his brother Mark Thompson and his widow Paulette Reveiz Thompson. When Mangione entered the courtroom he briefly glanced over at the family. It was the first time Mangione and his victim's family had been in the same room.

After Mangione's guilty plea, Thompson's family vowed to continue seeking justice. "While nothing will ease the pain of losing him, we are grateful that the federal justice system has held the person responsible for this heinous act accountable. Now we look to the court to ensure that sentencing reflects the severity of this crime," they said in a statement. As details were read out, Thompson's mother Pat and widow Paulette both cried.

Thompson was walking along West 54th Street when he was shot twice at close range with a 9mm handgun.

Towards the end of the hearing, the judge asked once again how Mangione wanted to plead. He replied: "Guilty."

E-bike operator lacks crash cover

Millie Brigaud

About 14,000 hire e-bikes in London are not covered by third-party insurance in case of crashes, as the government faces calls to make it mandatory.

Voi is now the only e-bike operator in London without crash insurance for people who are injured by riders of its bikes. The Swedish company operates about 14,000 e-bikes and 2,000 e-scooters in London, and more than 15,000 e-bikes and 10,000 e-scooters across the UK. Its scooters are insured as required by law.

Voi's competitors, Lime and Bolt, have crash insurance in place for their bikes. Forest will have a similar policy from next month.

Sandy Peters, who discovered she would not receive compensation after a life-altering collision with a Forest e-bike last year, said the government must pass legislation to force operators to have third-party insurance or it would continue to be viewed as optional. "It's one thing saying it and another thing actually doing it," she said in response to Voi's lack of insurance.

Voi has said it is looking into insurance policies. It said: "Voi complies with all UK insurance requirements. E-bikes are not legally required to hold motor or third-party liability insurance in the UK, unlike shared e-scooters.

"We recognise this is an important and evolving area, and we have been actively engaging with insurance partners to identify a third-party liability product that provides meaningful protection in practice."

Campaigners have highlighted a problem with loopholes in existing third-party insurance policies for e-bikes. Insurers may refuse to pay out when the rider was on the pavement, under-age or rode through a red light before the crash.

Meanwhile, a bill heading through parliament could give Transport for London the power to regulate e-bikes — and mandate insurance.

This week thousands of Londoners took to e-bikes to visit viewing points for the solar eclipse. In Primrose Hill, bikes spilled out of the two designated parking bays, blocking the road leading up to the park and the pavement.

Forest said its teams worked overnight to redistribute the bikes before the morning. James Slater, a councillor focused on planning and sustainability in Camden, said: "We will continue to hold the operating companies to account and we have already impounded almost 3,000 bikes across the borough."

Transport for London said it welcomed legislation giving it "proper powers to regulate dockless bikes".

GUY BELL/ALAMY

Dozens of e-bikes blocked a road and pavement as riders went to view the solar eclipse at Primrose Hill on Wednesday

Girl, 2, hurt in e-scooter hit and run

A two-year-old girl was taken to hospital after being seriously injured in a hit and run with an electric bike.

The girl was struck at about 9pm on Thursday in Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. The rider did not stop after the collision.

She suffered serious injuries and was flown to hospital by air ambulance.

Essex Police said yesterday that she remained in hospital with her condition described as "critical, but stable".

Officers are appealing for witnesses. The electric bike is described as having a scrambler design with red handlebars.

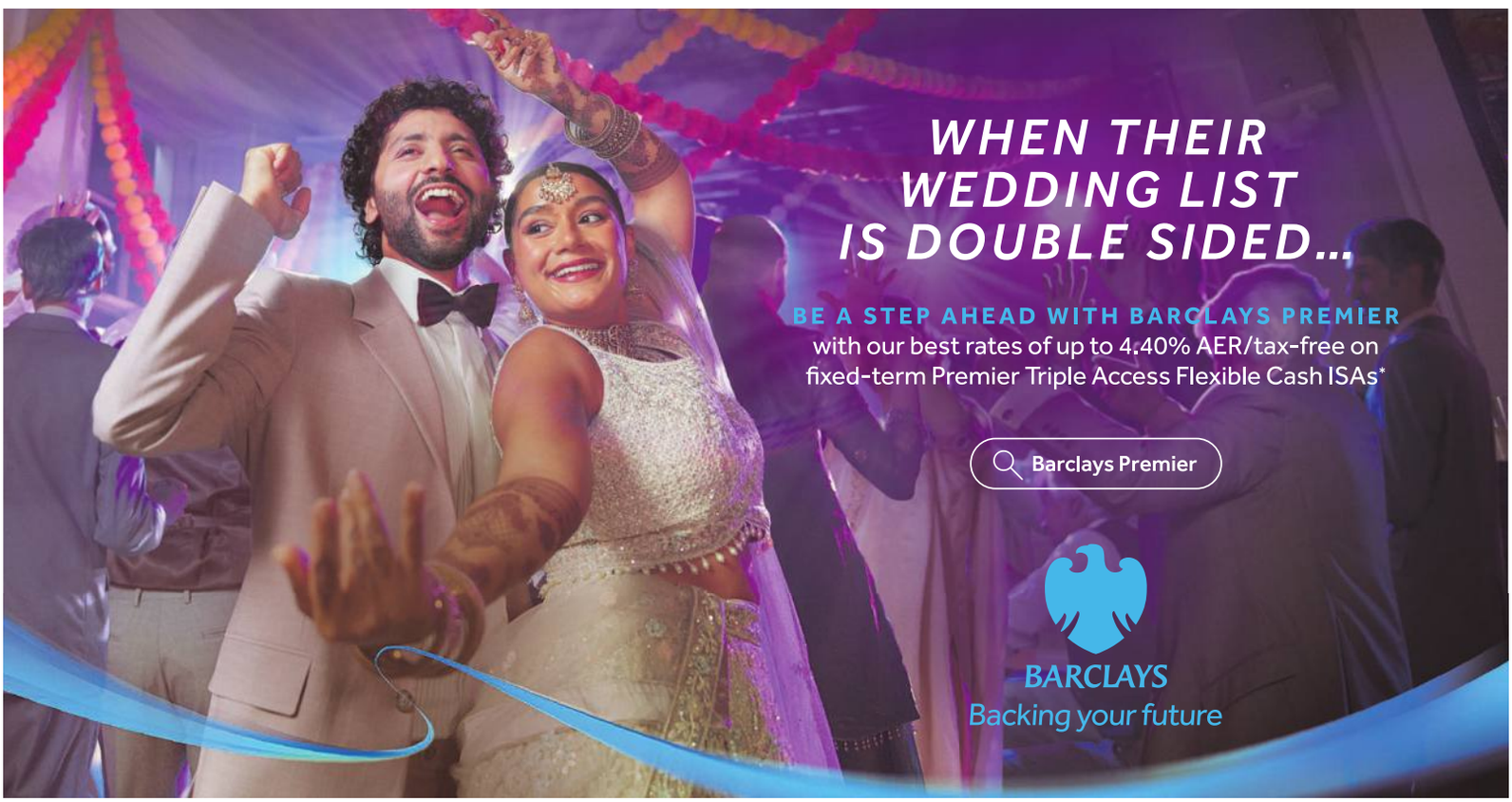
Chief Inspector Stuart Austin, the district commander for Tendring, said: "We know the dangerous and anti-social use of e-bikes, e-scooters and motorcycles impacts residents. We are committed to tackling the issue.

"A child has been hurt, and we are working at pace to locate the person responsible."

In Southampton, Hampshire, a 14-year-old e-scooter rider was arrested after a collision on Thursday with a 62-year-old woman on a bike that left her with life-threatening injuries.

The teenage boy was arrested on suspicion of causing serious injury by dangerous driving, using a motor vehicle in a public place without third-party insurance and driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police are appealing for witnesses. The boy has been bailed.



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News Green-run councils

Reality bites for town hall Greens, 100 days in power

The party's global preoccupations in local government have left many frustrated, writes **Lucy Bannerman**

There's a lift in an east London council block that has been broken since the Green Party swept to power in the May elections. For three months, residents have begged the new regime running Hackney council to fix the lift at Newcome House but Zoë Garbett, the borough's new mayor, and her cabinet have spent their first three months in office concentrating on bigger, bolder, non-lift-related matters.

They've declared plans to sue Sir Sadiq Khan over affordable housing targets; divest all London's local government pensions from any company remotely linked to Israel; withdraw co-operation with the Home Office over immigration raids; defy the Supreme Court over single-sex spaces; and save Gaza from destruction. They've written to the mayor of Haifa in Israel demanding an end to their historic and obscure twinning partnership of which few residents were aware, and then apologised to the same mayor for setting a consultation deadline of October 7, the anniversary of the Hamas terrorist attack.

Meanwhile, the lift remains broken and the older and disabled residents complain they are housebound.

Today marks 100 days since the Green Party recorded its best election results, winning control of three London boroughs, securing majorities in Norwich and Hastings and making breakthroughs in Scotland and Wales. Across the country, activists are now administrators. So how are they doing?

The broken lift

Unlike her neighbours on the top floor of Newcome House, Fern, 34, remains "over the moon" about the Greens' performance so far. Yes, she was trapped in the lift for 40 minutes. Yes, she had to be rescued by the fire brigade when council services failed to respond quickly enough. And yes, it did make her wonder what she's paying £200 a month for in service charges, but her optimism remains undimmed. Garbett, she beams, "is our Mamdani", comparing the pink-fringed councillor to New York's socialist firebrand.

Fern works in PR and owns her ex-council flat. She accepts she is typical of the young middle-class supporters who have propelled Zack Polanski's party to power across the capital's rapidly gentrifying boroughs. The new Green values are her values.

"They want change on a bigger level, not just a local level." In other words, she's prepared to wait for a functioning lift, while elected officials make noise over trans rights and ceasefires.

Her neighbours are not. Sara Raksoun, 29, a single mother who lives on the top floor with her five-year-old son, has complained to the council more than "50, 60" times about the lift since May. The mould in the bathroom is another story. She is not prepared to keep carrying her shopping up eight flights of stairs while councillors send missives to Israel.

Dylan Law, the 20-year-old deputy mayor responsible for housing, grew up in a Hackney council house with mould. He put his management degree on hold to join the cabinet. Raksoun is waiting for him to start making an impact. "The [housing officer] offered me a hotel. A hotel? I said I don't want a hotel. My food is here. My child's home is here. Why do I have to go to a hotel? It's upsetting. I don't think it's right."

Next door, a young woman worries how her bedbound grandfather is going to get to his hospital appointments. "Obviously there is a lot going on in the world right now, and I'm not saying ignore the international problems," she says, "but when there are people in your local area who are suffering, that's what needs focusing on. It's frustrating."

For their critics, the story of the Green Party's first 100 days in power is what happens when the unstoppable force of protest politics meets the immovable object of reality.

In Norwich, debate has revolved around pigeon droppings on a war memorial. Hastings, thanks to a Green motion, is officially "neurodiversity friendly". Mid Suffolk, Green since 2023, prides itself on its "sensible" focus on potholes and nuclear power. The most militant moves have been made in London, frequently in the Hackney borough Polanksi calls home. Activist habits die hard. Having weaponised identity politics to achieve record-breaking results, a new generation of Green councillors is grappling with an identity crisis of its own: how can you be your authentic, anti-authoritarian self when you are the local authority?

Protest and power

It was a point underlined by the mayor of Hackney when she opened her first full council meeting last month by thanking "everyone who's been protest-

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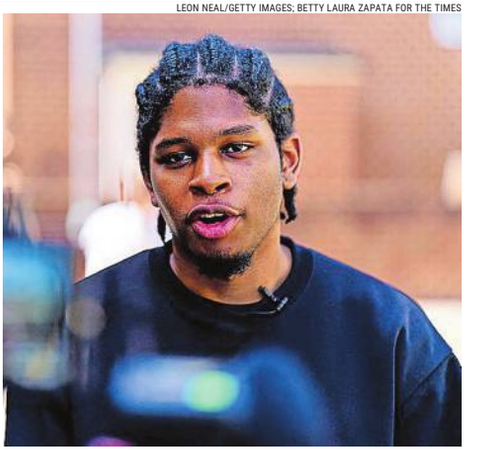
LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES; BETTY LAURA ZAPATA FOR THE TIMES



Zack Polanski, leader of the Green Party, left, with Zoë Garbett, Hackney mayor; Dylan Law, her deputy, right; Newcombe House, where the lift is broken; protesters at the March for Palestine; and the party's Brigitte Ascher canvassing in Kentish Town, bottom

ing outside the town hall". There were no effigies this time — a few weeks earlier, activists had stabbed darts through the eyes of a mock Andy Burnham. The gathering on July 28 had started peacefully. Green councillors in keffiyehs mingled with other people in keffiyehs who waved Palestinian flags. A trans woman took the loudspeaker to recite poetry — about "an albino rabbit in eyeliner" — while campaigners for "trans housing justice" held up banners demanding "trans homeless people aren't left behind". When asked how many transgender homeless people there were in the city, the campaigner couldn't say, but she was certain they were having a harder time than regular homeless people. Squabbles broke out when a woman, her head concealed by a keffiyeh, lobbed eggs at a bystander she accused of being "far right" and "Zionist". "You are not welcome here," she shouted. "Go!" The egg attack triggered an "I am Spartacus" effect among the factions, with shouts of "I'm the victim" and "no, she's the victim" and people accusing each other of assault until the egg-lobber was arrested.

Vicky, a local mother standing beside the counterprotesters with banners in support of Jewish residents, watched these deepening divisions in dismay, and wondered how any of it was helping the people of Hackney. "We just want the bins taken out, and good social care," she sighed.

School strike

Similar clashes are playing out across the capital. In Haringey, where the Greens lead a minority administration under the former Corbyn supporter Mark Blake, parents were furious to see newly elected Green councillors showing "solidarity" with striking teachers in the long-running dispute at Highgate Wood secondary school. Posting a photograph of himself on the picket line, Eddy Thacker wrote: "Already, the dispute has become an early political education for us newly elected councillors: a test for how elected socialist representatives can meaningfully stand alongside workers in struggle, while fighting for the schools and public services our communities deserve."

One mother, who said her children had missed 30 days of school as a result of strikes, said that view smacked of "student politics". Such a move, she said, made the Greens look ... green.

"You can't just stand and protest. That can't be the system of governing. Once you are an elected representative, you're not there to take sides. You are there to mediate. Who are they fighting against? What are they protesting? Themselves?"

Thacker insisted there was no contradiction. "I don't believe being an elected representative means being indifferent when workers in our community are in dispute, or that neutrality is the only responsible position to take."

Others on the learning curve include Fin Fitzgerald, chair of Haringey council's pensions committee, who appeared to have a reality check when he admitted his party's election promise to "Divest now!" might be trickier to deliver than he realised. In an Instagram update on "what I've learnt so far about the pensions landscape", he shared his discovery that no single London borough had the power to divest pensions from companies they don't like, because the pension pots are controlled collectively by a separate organisation. The admission prompted fury from Labour opponents, like Peray Ahmet, the former leader of Haringey council, who claimed she and her colleagues had been branded genocide-enabling "child killers" and been "shouted at for years" by Green campaigners when they dared point out the same thing.

"Bureaucracy is frustrating," said Ahmet. "[But] working out how the bureaucracy works is how you get things done. It's not for the faint-hearted. You don't get any thanks or glory. There's very little power, very little status and let's be honest, you don't get to influence the Middle East."

She predicted that many new activists-turned-councillors "will not do more than a term". In Sheffield, Andy Davies, the Green candidate who unseated the former city council leader, has already resigned, saying he "was not prepared for the huge weight of expectation and obligation". In Worcestershire, Martin Allen defected to the Liberal Democrats after ten years with the Greens, saying he had lost faith in Polanski's leadership.

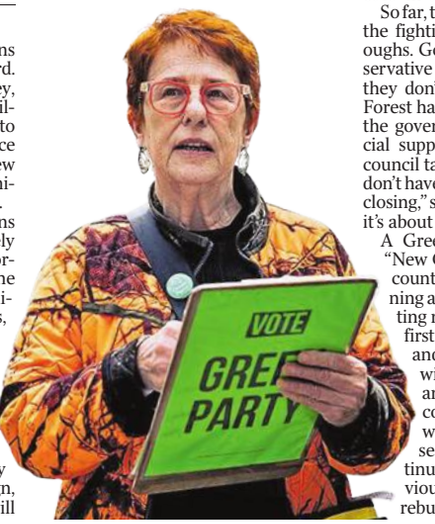
Trans inclusion

Opposition councillors say the Greens are picking battles they can ill afford. Kings Hall Leisure Centre in Hackney, for example, is undergoing a multimillion-pound revamp and is expected to reopen in 2029. But will it have a space where women can undress out of view of biological males? Or not? The architects at FaulknerBrowns will not say.

Garbett has vowed "maximum trans inclusion across all we do", effectively ending single-sex spaces in the borough. It would potentially expose the council to years of expensive discrimination claims from women's groups, who will have the national government, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Supreme Court on their side. Hackney council did not respond to questions on how it would pay to defend those discrimination claims.

Some supporters say they already feel let down. During their campaign, Hackney Greens won lots of goodwill from working parents over promises they would overhaul nursery fees. A month after triumphing in the polls, letters went out confirming that fees would rise by 3.8 per cent. A week of full-time nursery for children under two will now cost £519 for households with an income of more than £55,000. Parents say they feel betrayed. The Greens say they'll pass those feelings on to the higher-ups in central government whom, they claim, are the only ones who can do something about it.

Other gnarly problems are looming, mainly financial. Before Tammy Hymas became deputy leader of Haringey council, the transgender councillor and activist spent three years on campaigns and advocacy at Mermaids, the charity that was investigated by the regulator for handing out chest binders to children as young as 13 without their parents' knowledge. Now, she's leading a council in dire financial straits. Haringey is one of 35 councils receiving "exceptional financial support" this financial year, borrowing £84 million from government to balance the budget. She acknowledged the seriousness of the challenges ahead: "Across London, councils are struggling with the legacy of nearly two decades of funding cuts. With 13,000 people on the waiting list in Haringey, delivering more affordable housing is our top priority. We'll build more houses, increase our buy-back programme, and bring all our empty homes back into use. Unless Westminster deals with the underlying causes, the crisis of local government funding is only going to get worse."



Waltham Forest, in east London, is a borough of 276,000 people. Overnight, it went from having no Green councillors to having 31, with overall control of the council. The new mayor, Marcelo Hart-Camus, a cultural consultant who wears his ceremonial chains over his signature poncho as "an homage to his Andean roots", promotes a message of "togetherness" and shares jokey slogans, evoking the gentler image of the Greens during the Caroline Lucas era, as "yoghurt knitting wealth taxin' planet lovin' social justice bores".

So far, they have been slower to adopt the fighting talk of other Green boroughs. Good, says Emma Best, a Conservative councillor for Chingford — they don't have the luxury. Waltham Forest has applied for £19 million from the government in exceptional financial support as it battles to keep its council tax rises below 5 per cent. "We don't have enough housing. Schools are closing," she said. "It's not about protest, it's about people's money."

A Green Party spokesperson said: "New Green-led councils across the country have hit the ground running and are leading the way in putting residents and local businesses first, taking on vested interests, and investing in quality services with a humanitarian heart. We are incredibly proud of all our councillors and councils after we won a record number of seats in May ... and we will continue to fix the messes left by previous administrations so we can rebuild our communities."

News

Heads up for a bandana summer

Never mind Captain Jack Sparrow or Rosie the Riveter. This summer bandanas have been the fashionable set's must-have, and even made an appearance on the red carpet (Susie Lethbridge writes).

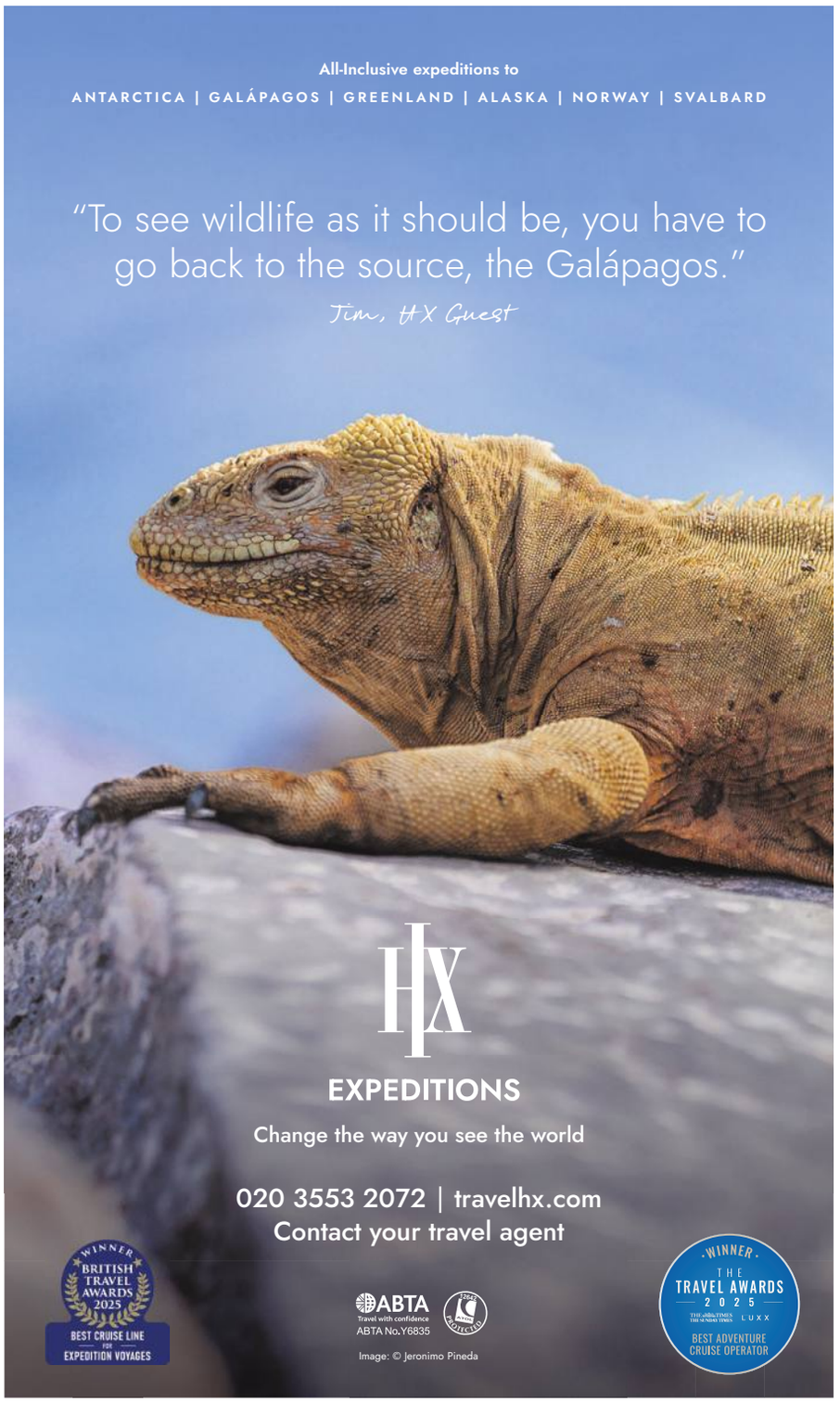
Zoë Kravitz was spotted in New York sporting a black paisley number not long after her engagement to Harry Styles; Dua Lipa swapped her bridal veil for a scarlet headscarf; and, at Wimbledon, the actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas swapped the usual brimmed sunhat for a patterned beige bandana — by Dior, no less. The fashion pack, meanwhile, are taking their Ralph Lauren versions on holiday.

Such is the bandana's ubiquity, it has even become a black tie-appropriate accessory. At the European Film Awards in Berlin, the Norwegian actress Renate Reinsve was spotted in a white Calvin Klein backless dress with a matching bandana. Alexa Chung later wore the New York brand's charcoal black version at Fashion Week. The American singer Gracie Abrams, whose signature bandana can be credited with boosting the trend after her Glastonbury performance last summer, recently released a variety of cotton headscarves alongside her latest album, *Daughter From Hell*. Hers cost £40, but similar styles are available on the high street from about £10.

Web searches for "bandana" have increased by 27 per cent over the past year and John Lewis reported that sales of its Hush paisley triangle scarf increased by 300 per cent in the past week.

Annabelle Taura at the online beauty and wellness platform Fresha pointed out that bandanas have also served a practical purpose in the heatwave: reducing exposure to damaging UV rays.

The bandana trend has been embraced by, from left, Alexa Chung, Dua Lipa, Zoë Kravitz and Priyanka Chopra Jonas



Mother who died was 'rushed' into buttock op choice

Herbie Russell

A mother of three died during a liposuction operation after being offered a last-minute Brazilian butt-lift surgery in Turkey.

Hayley Dowell, 38, was given "five minutes" to decide whether she wanted the discounted procedure, which involves inserting body fat into the buttocks, an inquest was told.

The trainee dental nurse, from Eastleigh, Hampshire, suffered two cardiac arrests and died at BHT clinic Istanbul Tema Hospital on October 3, 2023.

At her inquest, the coroner said Britons travelling abroad for cosmetic surgeries should be made aware of the risks of being asked to make snap decisions.

Neil Dowell, Hayley's husband, told Winchester coroner's court on Thursday that she had originally booked a tummy tuck and liposuction, but shortly before the operation a surgeon offered her a third procedure as an add-on at a £1,000 discount.

Mr Dowell said he was with his wife when she first met the surgeon, who suggested putting the fat from the liposuction into her bottom as it was a "little flat". He said she was "quite happy with that" but they did not know it was for an additional cost.

"As soon as he left the room, a young lady came in with a card machine. We had a five-minute window to decide to have the procedure [and] pay for it or not," he said. "I don't recall seeing a consent form at all. It was just in the moment; it was so quick. We had to make a quick decision. It was a mad rush."

Mr Dowell was initially told, after four hours of surgery, that everything was fine, the inquest was told. However, before midnight, the surgeon said his wife had suffered two cardiac arrests and "you should say your goodbyes".

Nicholas Walker, the area coroner, said the procedure was offered as "an afterthought" and warned that last-minute surgeries could risk more lives.

"Although on evidence Hayley did not die from [the Brazilian butt lift], this was offered to her and can be offered to others," he said. "I'm satisfied upselling in such circumstances and lack of time to reflect on consequences will create a risk of future deaths."

Elaine Sassoon, an expert witness and consultant plastic surgeon, said the case appeared to show that Mrs Dowell, described as a fun-loving woman who adored her children, had been treated as if she was on a "conveyor belt" rather than as "a human being".

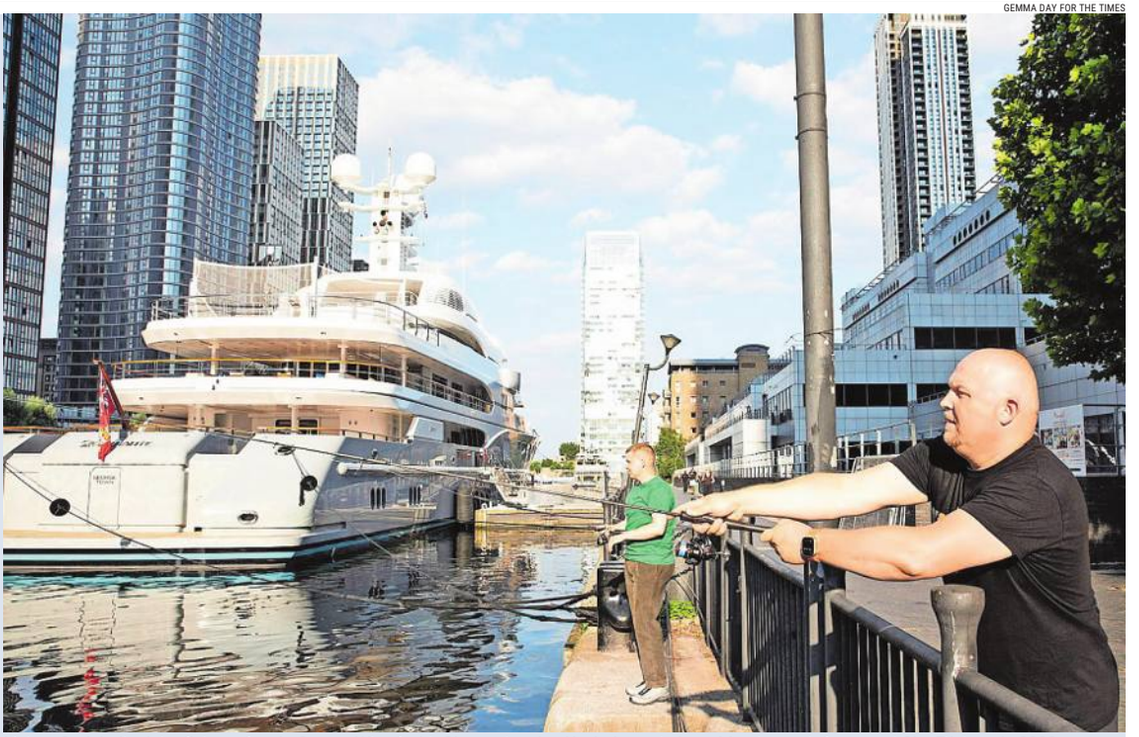
The coroner made no findings about the competence of the surgery or surgeon, but said that the family's questions may be answered in litigation that is taking place in Turkey. The clinic was an interested person in the inquest but did not give evidence.

Mr Dowell said his wife opted to travel abroad for the surgery as it was cheaper and a "kind of trend". She found the medical broker Qunomedical on the internet. The company organised the hotel, clinic and surgeon for about €7,000. Mr Dowell had also arranged dental work at the same time.

Recording a narrative conclusion, the coroner said he would write to the health secretary and the General Medical Council in a prevention of future deaths report. He will raise concerns regarding a lack of information on the extent of the problem of last-minute procedures.

Hayley Dowell was given five minutes to decide on the operation in Turkey

GEMMA DAY FOR THE TIMES



L'ubos Grajciarik, right, fishes often in Canary Wharf with City worker Jan Kazimierczak. Lucy Mantle, top left, started City Flickers in 2020

Gone fishing — in the heart of London

The evening sun reflects from Canary Wharf's glass monoliths as the fisherman arcs his lure high into the air (Ed Strang writes). The fly drops into the water, tiny ripples pushing an errant bottle cap further into the quay. "Maybe it's too hot for a three-footer," the angler says, drawing the lure towards him. "But we're certain to catch something." The remnants of a pineapple bob lazily in the water.

I am standing on the edge of South Dock, metres away from Canary Wharf Tube station. We are fishing — for pike, zander, perch, bream or eels.

In east London, the fish are wild. They swim up from the Channel and down from the Cotswolds, patrolling the brackish water that flows through the city.

L'ubos Grajciarik, 38, comes often to fish here with City worker Jan Kazimierczak. The size of the fish they catch is astonishing. "Last year I caught a 6lb pike from this railing," Grajciarik says. On social media anglers from across London proudly display their bounty.

Grajciarik is the administrator of the Facebook group Urban Angling in London, which has just shy of 10,000 members. Membership has grown by 51 per cent in the past year. But why London when there is easy access to streams around the perimeter of the city that feel like you are in the countryside?

"In London," Grajciarik says, "public transport means you don't have to walk 10km to get to where you want to fish. You also have toilets here, and restaurants if you're settling in for the evening. If I get hungry there's more than just blackberries around."

One of those encouraging young Londoners to fish is Lucy Mantle, who started the angling society City Flickers in 2020. She said that "doing something relaxing, is extremely beneficial to a lot of young people".

Staring into the Thames, which was declared biologically dead in the 1950s, it is hard to imagine that much could live there.

For Joe Leapman, 20, who regularly fishes on Hampstead Heath, anglers play an important role in environmental stewardship. "Some people do leave behind litter and fishing gear," Leapman says. "That riles me up."

The Times' Clean It Up campaign has been calling for better regulation and deeper investment to improve the state of the nation's waterways.

Fiennes sets stage for village buyout of pub

Ed Halford

Ralph Fiennes, the actor who played Voldemort in the Harry Potter film series, and the *Blackadder* actress Helen Atkinson-Wood have backed a community campaign in Suffolk to save a grade II listed pub.

Residents in Middleton hope to raise £550,000 to buy the Bell Inn, a 17th-century thatched pub, outright.

Villagers are used to celebrities ducking through the pub's low doorway, and many reminisce about the days when a teenage Ed Sheeran drank there.

After the brewery Adnams, known for its Southwold bitter, announced plans this year to sell the pub for £425,000, residents formed a charitable community benefit society to lead a buyout. Thirty residents have bought shares so far and many are planning to make charitable donations, which will benefit from tax relief.

Community pub buyouts are becoming more common: 101 active campaigns are under way according to the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra). Paul Ainsworth, its national planning and policy adviser, expects the government's forthcoming £60 million community right-to-buy fund to spur more. He said: "I think it will revitalise the whole community ownership scene because money is the root of all these schemes ... like the one in Suffolk — £500,000 is not small change, so raising that amount of money yourself is quite a challenge."

Ralph Fiennes, right, with staff from the Bell Inn in Middleton, Suffolk

With the number of community-owned pubs in the UK standing at 237, Ainsworth said this unique way of operating a pub was "gathering momentum", adding that "wherever you are in the country you're not that far from a community-owned pub these days and they're always very happy to help each other".

He said they were overwhelmingly successful and only a few had failed. "It is not surprising as people in the community have a direct or indirect stake in the business as it's their pub."

Gillian Stacey, who is leading the Bell Inn campaign, said: "You drive through picturesque villages in Suffolk and when pubs are on the market they become derelict very quickly as this one would do." Stacey calls the Bell "the focal point of the community", adding that it survived pandemic lockdowns by offering takeaway pints.

Fiennes, who owns a home close to nearby Dunwich Heath, told The Times: "The Bell at Middleton has kept its integrity as a village pub. I mean it has atmosphere — simple, convivial, traditional, friendly. No frills or trying too hard. You feel at home the moment you walk in. And most important it feels 'Suffolk'."

He added: "Pubs like the Bell are a true expression of their neighbourhood and I think the best of any country is in the spirit of its neighbourhoods and villages."

Atkinson-Wood also threw her support behind the campaign, saying: "We need to keep pubs open at the heart of our communities as places to go for a drink and a packet of crisps." She said pressure to offer a "gastropub experience" made it harder for traditional drink-first pubs to survive. Unlike in cities, pub closures in villages leave few remaining social spaces.

The campaign has raised £380,000 so far. Planned fundraisers include an auction where activities that can be bid on include an etching course, a drive in a Maserati, a sheep day (lambing) and a day in a Southwold beach hut.

Escapes from salmon farms fill rivers with hybrid species

Marc Horne

Nearly three quarters of rivers along Scotland's west coast were found to contain wild salmon carrying the DNA of escaped farmed fish, prompting fears for the future survival of the species.

Scottish government scientists tested nearly 7,000 wild salmon at more than 830 rivers to discover the extent of farm-to-wild interbreeding. The research, funded by Holyrood, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Crown Estate Scotland, found 20 per cent of the country's river networks contained hybrid salmon.

In west-coast regions, up to 72 per cent of the rivers were found to harbour salmon containing farmed fish DNA. In major eastern rivers, such as the Tweed, Tay and Dee, far removed from commercial sea-cage fishing, levels of interbreeding were close to zero.

Wild Atlantic salmon populations were declared endangered in Britain in 2023 after a collapse in their numbers.

The research, published in the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea's Journal of Marine Science, found significant levels of interbreeding in 25 of the 28 Scottish regions surveyed. When escaped fish from farms mate with wild stock, the offspring exhibit lower survival rates.

Dale Vince, the multimillionaire renewable energy entrepreneur and Labour donor, was horrified by the findings. "Wild salmon have been in existence for over 70 million years," he said. "But in just a few decades, the salmon farming industry in Scotland has corrupted its DNA."

A spokesman for the Green Britain Foundation, founded by Vince, added: "Unlike sea lice or seabed pollution, this damage is permanent."

Nick Underdown, Scotland director for the campaign group WildFish, urged the Scottish government to halt the expansion of salmon farming. He added: "We also advocate a managed phase out of salmon farming, similar to other countries like Canada."

The Times previously disclosed that almost 36 million fish died in Scottish aquaculture cages between 2023 and 2026, while 103 welfare violations were recorded last year. It also emerged that record levels of formaldehyde, a carcinogenic disinfectant used by salmon farmers, were discharged into Scottish waters in 2025.

Salmon Scotland, which represents the farmed fish industry, said: "We are all concerned by the long-term decline in wild salmon. It is wrong to blame salmon farming for that decline when the Scottish government has identified more than 40 pressures behind the worrying trends in wild fish numbers.

"Our members work incredibly hard to achieve zero escapes, and the sector has just agreed a new scheme with Fisheries Management Scotland to fund conservation and research when incidents do occur."

The Scottish government has stressed that it is committed to ensuring animal welfare and supporting the food sector.

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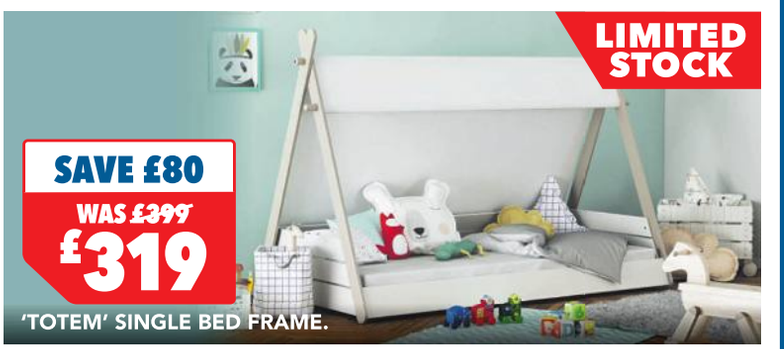

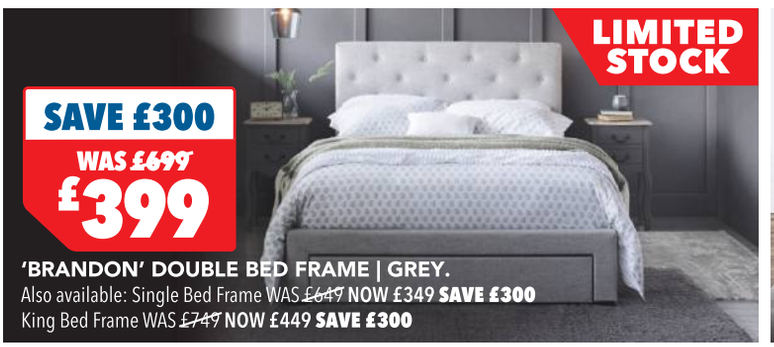

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News

Killer who won't say where body is must stay in prison

The daughter of Linda Razzell, who was murdered by her estranged husband Glyn, has said his decision not to say where her mother's body is means "there is no peace for us", after the High Court quashed the Parole Board's decision to release him on licence.

Yesterday Catherine Razzell said her father was "choosing to be controlling and abusive from within prison" after the murder in Wiltshire in 2002. Glyn Razzell was jailed for life with a minimum of almost 16 years in 2003, and the Parole Board said in April that he could be released on licence.

The Ministry of Justice referred the case to the High Court and Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb quashed the decision because Razzell was "fundamentally dishonest" and "continues to withhold information that he could deliver up".

Catherine Razzell, the daughter of Linda, right, who was killed in 2022

Catherine Razzell said the decision was a "relief" to her and her family, and that her father's decision not to disclose the location of the remains was "cruel".

She said: "By choosing to withhold the only information that could provide us with some comfort and closure, and preventing us from being able to hold a funeral for our much-loved mother, he is clearly demonstrating he is still abusive, retaining power over the situation and prioritising his narrative, where he can deny killing her, despite being found guilty and given a life sentence.

"To our knowledge, he is of sound mind and knows what he is doing, so there is no reason for him to be released while he is still actively choosing to be controlling and abusive from within prison ... As well as experiencing the most devastating loss of my mother, 24 years later we are still in court trying to keep the rest of our family safe from a man who is continuing to do our family harm. None of us want my father to die in prison; what we want is for him to acknowledge what he has done, show remorse and tell us where our mother's body is so that we can finally lay her to rest."

JANE BARLOW/PA

Happy to be here **The Duchess of Edinburgh visits Capability Scotland in the city, which provides care, support and education for disabled children and adults**

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Councils and NHS stall on single-sex spaces

Bill Curtis

Dozens of public bodies have failed to set out a timeline for implementing guidance protecting single-sex spaces.

Only one council has publicly changed its policies since the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance came into force last week.

The Times questioned a sample of councils and NHS trusts and found that only two of the 52 that outlined a policy on the guidance had set out a timeline to embed it.

Campaigners criticised public bodies over the delay at a time of concern that transgender women were still being routinely allowed to use female-only spaces.

Fiona McAnena, of the Sex Matters charity, said: "They seem to think women can be kept waiting indefinitely for the privacy, dignity and safety of single-sex spaces to be restored. Public bodies are dragging their feet ... The delay is inexcusable."

Of the 35 councils assessed, all but two said their rules were under review or officials were considering the implications of the guidance, which sets out how organisations should interpret a Supreme Court ruling from April last year on the definition of a woman. Exeter council said changes would be implemented in the "next few months" and Plymouth council said an "initial review" would be completed within four to six weeks.

Local authorities that refused to implement timelines gave a variety of reasons for the delay. City of York council said it was auditing buildings to "ensure we are legally compliant and as inclusive and accessible as possible". Inverclyde council said a "short-life working group" had been established.

The leaders of six London boroughs — Lambeth, Hackney, Haringey, Lewisham, Southwark and Waltham Forest — have vowed to resist the guidance, which they warned would be "harmful to the rights of trans people".

Haringey council hosts a weekly daytime refuge for homeless and vulnerable women called the Women Only One Stop Hub. The authority's website says it is a "safe space for all women, including cis and trans women". The hub lets users "have a shower" and access "domestic violence and abuse support". Other wellbeing activities, such as nail painting and yoga, are available.

Lisa Lockey, left, and Bethany Hutchison, both nurses, after a tribunal in January ruled that they had suffered harassment over their hospital's policy on sharing changing rooms with transgender colleagues

Bristol city council, run by the Green Party, said services could admit people according to their gender identity, meaning trans women could be allowed into women's services. However, it said any service operating in that way must not be described as female-only and should instead be labelled "single-gender" or "trans-inclusive".

A leaked email from the LGBT+ staff network at Leicestershire county council sent to staff members said the group had been "looking behind the scenes" to keep services "inclusive for everyone".

Norfolk county council has released an interim policy. It requires "single-sex facilities to be used according to biological sex at birth", rather than chosen gender. It said an equality impact assessment would have to be carried out before the policy was finalised.

Of the 17 NHS trusts questioned, none set out a timeline for updating their policies. Many pointed to NHS England, which has yet to replace its outdated guidance that allows trans patients to be treated in the ward of their choosing. NHS England insisted its policies would be updated "shortly" and said trusts should be following the law.

A source last week suggested that the Cabinet Office was behind the delays, saying it was responsible for the implementation of the EHRC's guidance across government bodies. The Cabinet Office denies this.

Bethany Hutchison, a nurse who led a successful tribunal claim against County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust over a trans colleague using single-sex changing rooms, said: "It is unacceptable for responsibility to be shuffled between NHS trusts, NHS England and government while confusion remains."

Separately, The Times identified three universities that had outdated policies in place. King's College London and Birkbeck, University of London, said new policies would be in place by the start of term next month. The University of Bath said changes would not be implemented until next year.

The University of Edinburgh's students' association vowed to "endeavour to mitigate the harm caused by these changes in how we implement them".

The death of reading puts the world in a perilous place
Weekend essay, James Marriott
Pages 32-33

Comment

It was neglect, not Farage, that won Clacton

Voters in left-behind Britain back Reform not out of loyalty to its leader but because no one else recognises their plight

Fraser Nelson
@FRASERNELSON

You can see why Nigel Farage didn't show up at the count for the Clacton by-election. He had unleashed a circus, with Count Binface leading a troupe of novelty candidates all waiting for him on stage. Joining them would make a mockery of his "people v the establishment" framing so he stayed away, on the pretext of a security threat (which police deny). This is a war of narratives and he now has a new one: that he's an avenger facing media smears, political attacks and threats to his life. And that he has now, in Clacton, been vindicated.

The whole £250,000 spectacle has been so needless, so bizarre that it's tempting to ignore it. The mocking presence of Binface (who did quite well) is a warning not to take any of it seriously. But when support for mainstream parties is collapsing, all manner of lunacy can come to the fore — as a look across the Atlantic reminds us. There are serious signals in the Clacton debacle, and in the strikingly high turnout. Farage is undeniably seen there not only as a force for change but as the only force they can believe in. The harder question is why.

Farage's main message is that Clacton shows he is the Rasputin of Westminster. His base support is rock solid and no scandal, headline or revelation can threaten him. He has barely been to his seaside town or held any constituencies. But he chose Clacton because the normal rules of politics do not apply. Its political power comes from demographics, a lesson learnt from the Brexit referendum. It is full of the type of problems suffered by people likely to vote for him no matter what — and stand ready to do so again.

This is not about crude deprivation. When I made a Channel 4 film about Reform UK last year, I tried to understand what unites its voters. I was struck to see how much of the correlation is medical: bad backs, lung disease, sickness benefit, motability scooters. Hallmarks of ex-industrial Britain. Dig further and we see traits of intergenerational poverty: low breastfeeding rates, child obesity, teenage pregnancy. The same traits are true for Reform targets such as Knowlsey, Blackpool, Barnsley, Sunderland and Hartlepool.

Farage is undeniably seen in Clacton as a force for change

Reformland is also overwhelmingly white. Concern about migration is not a complaint about a local influx. It's more about a globalist economic system that imports new workers rather than spreading opportunity to places that most badly need it. What Michael Howard called the "British dream" is very real to those who arrive here, and to their children. But it's less real to white people who, studies suggest, have the lowest social mobility of any ethnic group other than Black Caribbean. To talk of white victimisation (as Farage has been trying to) misses the mark. This is not bigotry, but it is neglect.

The coastal village of Jaywick, within Farage's constituency, was given a national spotlight by the Channel 5 series *Benefits by the Sea*. It's a compelling, albeit shocking story of the lives of those mired in drinks, drugs and welfare dependency. The comedian Kevin Bridges has a riff about how hard it is to buy 70th birthday cards in such places, given the lack of demand. The shopkeeper, he says, may offer you a 30th and a 40th.

We're good at making films and jokes about such poverty, less good at fixing it. Voters in these places notice, and see things get worse. Hence the political vacancy being filled by Farage.

So we end up with Reform UK, being driven by demographics, not by normal political factors. This makes it scandal-resistant, if not quite scandal-proof — a common populist trait. "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody," Donald Trump once said, "and I wouldn't lose any voters. It's, like, incredible." Quite so. Perhaps Farage could spend every night bathing in champagne poured by crypto convicts and still win places like Clacton. He's proud of his invincibility. Why, he now asks, bother asking about his money? Why bother with a parliamentary censure? Another by-election would be silly, no?

There are two answers to this. First, the journalists he so loudly complains about aren't trying to depose him. They're doing what the free press tends to do in democracies — scrutinise those in power, reveal the undisclosed property empires or secret backhanders. Farage's core supporters may not care about the sleaze, but the average voter does. Perhaps that's why his personal approval rating is falling, and Reform UK's support along with it.

STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA

Nigel Farage's funding has turned Reform into a crypto-lobbying party

One big change is that of perception. Until recently, Farage was the bookmakers' favourite to be the next prime minister. It may sound bizarre to talk about the outcome of an election in three years' time but the expectation of power (or its impending loss) decides fates in Westminster. It inspires loyalty or rebellion; it's a huge factor for donors, speculators and ship-jumpers. But bookmakers are starting to put Burnham down as the next election winner, and Kemi Badenoch as his most likely successor. This changes things.

When people start to whisper that Farage is dead in the water and will probably resign before the election, his authority can start to weaken. People such as Zia Yusuf, his policy chief, can start to act up and flex their muscles in anticipation of a leadership ballot. We can see these strange explosions happening now, on the sidelines, open arguments that would once never have taken place.

The parliamentary investigation into Farage's £5 million gift will now resume and he is bracing himself. "Maybe I haven't filled in a piece of paper," he now says. It goes beyond that. He failed to disclose, even to his closest colleagues, a huge and deeply personal obligation to a crypto king, while making Reform a crypto-lobbying party. As the saying goes, every great cause begins as a movement, becomes a business and eventually degenerates into a racket. Reform UK may be condensing this cycle. But there is, still, a great cause.

Burnham is now being predicted as the next election winner

If the Tories or Labour want to respond to Reform, they should do it not simply by fighting Farage but by recognising the real message coming out of places like Clacton. People there are not asking for "levelling-up" patronisation, a shiny new building or more welfare. They want an economic model that doesn't treat them as the roadkill of globalisation, one that sees their children as assets to be nurtured rather than liabilities to be paid off.

"Stay tuned for part two," says Count Binface. If the parliamentary investigation does lead to a new by-election, Clacton and places like it may get a real contest demanding more thoughtful answers to their problems. Reform UK has, so far, not come up with much. It's time for the Tories and Labour to get thinking.

Ann Treneman Notebook

Take splat! You can't top the humble flyswatter

I've had an idea, which, as those who know me well will confirm, is always a worrying thing. It popped into my mind earlier this summer when, battling a fly that was trying to get involved with my fruit salad, I grabbed a tea towel to hit it. This resulted in bits of fruit escaping the bowl and a glass of water upturned, requiring cloths and a mop. I moved on to a rolled-up magazine and an oven glove. The fly lived.

The next day I bought four garishly-coloured plastic flyswatters for £2.49. They are incredibly effective and, frankly, the flies now know I am armed and dangerous, because they mostly stay away.

Mulling the beauty of the flyswatter, I realised that it is one of those rare things that simply cannot be bettered. Simple, swift, silent, deadly. Plus portable and pinpoint-precise. And, no, I don't think those killer electric paddles or ugly twisty sticky tape things are remotely better, as they are all about mass and random death. Plus, they can't kill the fly in the fruit salad, can they? The humble flyswatter cannot be beaten. How many things can you say that about? And that's when I had my idea.

Stick with me

It's for a self-help book, or indeed podcast (of course), about helping people choose the best career for themselves based around the longevity of the flyswatter. That's the elevator pitch (do people still do those?) and I admit it lacks a certain something. Still, stay with me here. In my day there was a book called *What Colour is Your Parachute?*, which was all about identifying what you loved and making it a career. Now, though, AI is also in the mix. There is no way that AI can be a flyswatter. AI can be many things — doctor, seamstress, fitness coach — and YouTube is often tedious but helpful in finding how to reprogram your black box or whatever. But AI can't kill a fly, only you can do that.

My idea, which I pass on to the world entirely free of charge in the week of A-level results, is a book called *Find Your Inner Flyswatter*, though that title may need some work. It's all about finding a career that you will love and that AI can't touch. It's about — swat, swat — winning.

Eclipse failure

I have had the flu most of this week and, even if there had been eclipse-proof specs for sale, I wasn't well enough to get to the shops. Still, the flu is hardly a reason to miss the eclipse of the century or whatever they were calling it. In 1999, I spent two weeks roaming Cornwall to write about the eclipse of that century. This time I couldn't just sit indoors.

What to do? My daughter said something about a colander but instead I made a *Blue Peter*-style pinhole camera with some card and held it above a piece of paper. I tried this out in my driveway, feeling like an idiot. Total failure. But later I noticed gorgeous eclipse patterns on the garage door opposite as the light came through the trees.

Out for the count

An email arrives about my list of irritating words with the succinct subject line: "Amount v number." "I don't know whether you have noticed but 'amount' is definitely in the ascendant," notes reader Richard Stillwell. "Even where the thing(s) described can be counted, the word 'amount' is used. I recently heard an interview with a journalist who reminisced that one of her early tasks was to count the amount of Scud missiles going over in a war zone. Really." I hadn't noticed, but now I do.

@ANNTRENEMAN

Comment

I used to worship cars but I've been converted

Age of the soft-top is over and frankly that's fine: driving one was never a symbol of freedom but a sad, capitalist illusion

Giles Coren

It is the summer of 1976 — the weather is warm, famously — and your columnist has come to the end of his first year at prep school. He stands at its front door, at the top of the steps, with a handful of other boys, where they command a view down the long suburban avenue up which their parents will arrive to whisk them away for the summer.

There is the roar of an engine gunning up into third, and in the distance a blue spaceship crests the hill and swoops down towards them, its tail fins winking in the afternoon glare. Unusually, for a spaceship, it is roofless. And as it comes (rapidly) closer you can see its blue leather interior, walnut trim and, in the cockpit, denim shirt sleeves rolled to the elbow, flat cap protecting his bald head from the sun, Rothmans hanging from his lower lip, the 38-year-old deputy editor of Punch, Alan Coren. My old man.

"Ho, Jig!" he cries from the driving seat as the 1965 Mercedes Benz 220SE (the only right-hand drive convertible of that model in midnight blue ever made — if you want to believe the driver) purrs up to the kerb and I scamper down the steps, leap in (no seatbelts), receive a warm, smoky kiss (with a backnote of Aramis) and away we roar, like Batman and Robin.

That car — its colour, its shape, its leather-and-engine-oil smell, but most of all the blue canvas roof that he rolled back whenever it wasn't actually snowing (too hard) — was everything to my father. The locus and focal point of his maleness, if not his very humanity.

I tell a lie. The locus and focal point of his maleness was a red two-seater Austin Healey 3000 — convertible, naturally — that he drove as a younger man but had to sell in 1969 because, he said quite often, there was no room in it for me. Which forever left me with the impression that, much as he loved me, I was no substitute for a Healey.

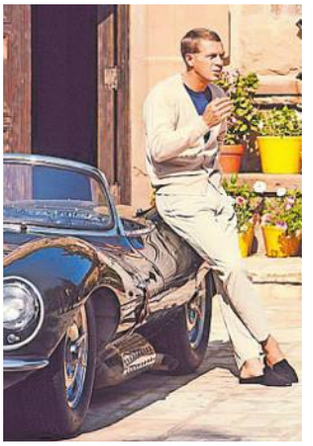
But the Merc was, up to a point, and he drove it until the mid 1980s when rust set in and the company gave him a Volvo. But he did not enjoy the Volvo. For it had a roof. And was therefore a car for losers (though he still gunned its engine to the max and hovered over the irrelevant automatic gear lever like he was driving Le Mans). So he bought a bright red convertible

> The roof of my Kia doesn't come off. Nor would I want it to

BMW 320i and drove that for the rest of his life.

It was genetic, for him, the convertible. He drove with the roof down in all weathers, like his father before him and his grandfather before that. Although his grandfather's convertible, to be fair, was a peasant's haycart pulled by a tired old horse through the muddy streets of Tsarist Plonsk.

And that was the point, you see.



Steve McQueen helped sustain an image created by profiteering fascists

That motoring should put you in touch with an earlier age, a more muscular time, a dream of freedom (illusory, as we shall see), where a man and his car can go anywhere, do anything. And he passed it on to me, deliberately. Desperately wanted me to feel the brute connection with a raw, topless motor vehicle that he did.

When I turned 21, he bought me a blue MGB Roadster (I later bought many convertibles myself), whose roof was such a hassle to put back up that I sometimes didn't bother, and then it would rain in the night and... to this day, if I'm woken by a storm in the small hours, I sit bolt upright in bed and think, "Shit! Did I put the roof on?"

Yeah, I did. Because the roof of my Kia Sportage non-plugin hybrid compact SUV doesn't come off. Nor would I want it to. Times have changed, you see, and nothing about my sense of self, no delusion of wildness or untameability, is vested in my motor car (though the Kia is quicker off the mark than the Healey and much faster than the Merc). Which is why I wasn't surprised to read this week that convertible sales in the UK are down 90 per cent over 20 years, with makers such as Vauxhall, Peugeot, Jaguar and even Audi ceasing production altogether, to the outrage of those creaking, leather-gloved moustache mongers who still cleave to the old ways.

The former *Top Gear* guy Richard Hammond was on Times Radio mourning the news, eulogising the wind in his hair, the "fun", and deriding (rather poetically) the "autonomous, Tupperware boxes that you order from your smartphone, and they take you where you want to go" that have taken their place.

But with all respect to Hammond — who nearly died at high speed, twice, attempting to perpetuate the old marketing myth that driving is in some way heroic or sexy — those days are gone. *Top Gear* is finished and it ain't coming back. Not just because it nearly killed Hammond. But because it nearly killed Freddie Flintoff, too, whose face was all but torn off on the show when he flipped over in a... convertible.

And also because the young don't give a damn. They're not learning to drive (they can't get tests anyway), they dream of the impending driverless vehicles that will turn our roads into little more than tram routes, and they are baffled by the raging of aged motor clowns against the 20mph speed limit, which is more than fast enough for their electric scooters, especially as they want to be looking at their phones as they go.

That, to them, is freedom. Not the right to swill a few lagers, hop in your Morgan with a pair of goggles on and hit a tree at 150mph. That era of motor macho has passed. And no one under 40 wants it back.

That generation of men for whom a car was a symbol of independence, maturity and power grows old and silly. They rant against speed limits, cycle lanes, environmental measures and cameras as if the freedom to drive were a human right. But it isn't. It's a capitalist illusion created in the early 20th century by car manufacturers and oil companies, profiteering fascists like Henry Ford, to make men believe that freedom was something you could buy. Who persuaded their governments to divest from the railways in favour of roads (most calamitously in the US, but also here) and tricked us into building a world in which our homes, workplaces, shops, schools, hospitals, friends and families were spread so far apart that we came to depend on cars to live our lives.

But the cars were prisons we were forced into by a lie. The same lie that sold us cigarettes, booze, coffee, televisions, mobile phones. And taking the roof off them doesn't make them more "fun". Smoking was "fun". Bear-baiting was "fun". Heroin is "fun". Grow the hell up. We fried the world with our motor obsession, which is why it is hotter than 1976 today and will be tomorrow. And the day after that, a horse-drawn cart in the drive is going to look like the height of luxury.

Jonathan Tulloch Nature Notebook

Cloudburst a relief for Thirsk's old thirsty oak

I had spent the morning working in Thirsk's Costa drive-thru — or, rather, I'd been writing the odd sentence and then staring through the plate-glass window to commiserate with the old oak growing just beyond the car park.

The ground was parched and the tree was feeling the strain. In its lifetime, the Costa oak has watched the land around it change from woods to fields to an A19 service station, but it won't have experienced anything like this year.

About to close my laptop for the morning, I heard a sudden beating of drums; rain was bouncing on the mono-pitched roof. All at once, the café was a waterfall and its car park a play fountain.

A family dashed through the water and were still laughing as they burst into the café. The cloudburst grew yet stronger, and even the dogs dozing under the tables pricked their ears. Laptop left on the table, I dashed outside.

With roots that can find water four metres underground, oaks are skilled at surviving dry periods. They also have stomatal control, closing the tiny pores in their leaves to minimise water loss during transpiration, and can even enlist the co-operation of microorganisms in the soil to assist their drought tolerance. But when I reached the oak, I could sense how pleased it was to be at last standing tall in a refreshing downpour. And I was too. After all, how simple everything is. Water is life.

Song of hope

"How do you do it?" a friend of mine asked the day after the all too brief cloudburst. "How do you write about nature all the time when it's dying and everything is burning?" I didn't know what to say, so I got on my old seven-geared bike and went for a ride. Generous spring rain and our luck in escaping some of the most punishing temperatures meant that North Yorkshire hadn't yet been hit as hard as other parts of the country, so although the valleys were weirdly arid, the wooded hills were still green. I was approaching Carlton Husthwaite when I heard something entirely unexpected: a willow warbler.

Though nondescript in appearance (sometimes referred to in birder circles as one of the LBJs, or little brown jobs), the willow warbler's song has all the colours missing from its plumage. The wistful notes descended a whole octave before dissolving into a gentle cadence. Why was it singing in August?

Breeding was over and it was on its way to Africa. To me it sounded like a farewell.

At that moment, my friend's words came back to me; well, now I had my answer. The willow warbler is why I continue to write about the beauty of nature even in these troubled times, why I refuse to give up hope that the world can somehow rein in those vested interests accelerating climate breakdown. Migrants from the sub-Sahara, willow warblers are vulnerable to climate change. Unless we act now, future generations won't hear their ravishing melody.

Oaks are adept at enduring dry spells but willow warblers, left, need help

Call for farmers to help

Climate breakdown is the last thing I want to write about, and in the past when people like me have talked about it (droned on, some might say), we often just seemed to irritate those we sought to persuade. But things have changed now, we can all smell the smoke.

So for the future of the Costa Oak, the Carlton Husthwaite willow warblers and everything else, I want to reach out to someone who will be listened to and can do great good. As yet another heatwave breaks, I'm asking Tom Bradshaw, the president of the National Farmers' Union, for some help.

Tom, I have farmers in the family, I know how hard you all work and how worried you are about climate breakdown. I know that many working in agriculture have a uniquely intimate love of nature.

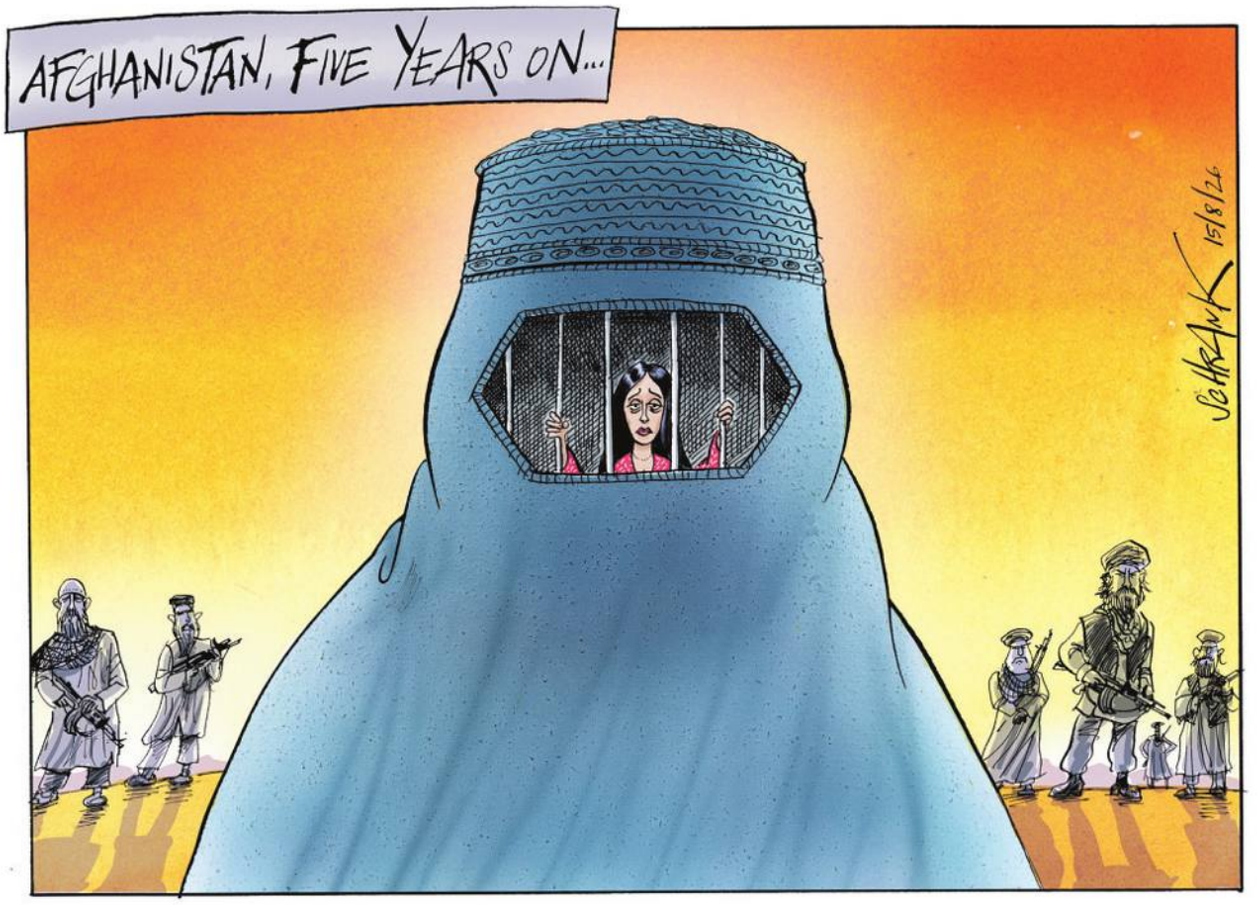
My request is simple. Can you and your union run a campaign that encourages your members to allow one tree in every 20 yards of hedge to grow to its full size?

In this way, our 500,000 miles of hedgerow could rapidly produce 44 million trees, not only storing huge amounts of carbon but ensuring that willow warblers will find singing perches aplenty when they return in spring.

After all, your surname is perfect for the job. The name Bradshaw was originally given to people living in the broad shaw. Shaw was an old word for a large thicket, the kind of intimate woodland perfect for singing willow warblers.

Jonathan Tulloch's children's novel Cuckoo Summer was nominated for the Carnegie Medal

@JONATHANTULLOCH



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Help me, please, to educate these numbskulls

Time to resurrect public information films that teach us not to litter or to muck about with fire, electricity and water

Sarah Ditum

@SARAHDITUM

I went to one of my favourite places to watch the eclipse this week, a spot on the River Frome that's popular with swimmers. While I was there, I saw something that affected me even more profoundly than the cosmic alignment of heavenly bodies. In the middle of the parched grass, in full view of a sign reading "EXTREME DANGER OF FIRE", I watched a man in his twenties casually spark up a cigarette.

Obviously, I dug out my most passive-aggressively polite voice to tell him that this wasn't a very good idea, and to his credit he carefully stubbed it out. But I couldn't extinguish my own incredulity about what I'd just seen. What kind of person gets to be a grown adult without realising that tinder-dry vegetation and naked flames are a bad combination?

Based on the number of wildfires consuming Britain's thirsty landscape, my riverside friend is no aberration. Some of these blazes will, inevitably, be the work of arsonists. Most of them, however, will be down to simple stupidity: a disposable barbecue, a campfire, a little drag on a fag in the sunshine. And then, whoops, it gets out of control and suddenly you're standing in a world of ashes.

You wouldn't catch me doing any of this because I am part of the generation that grew up absolutely terrified of fire, thanks to the public information films I watched as a child in the 1980s. Touch a packet of matches? I might as well stick my arm in a furnace. Charley the cartoon cat said not to do it, so I didn't.

The Charley Says cartoons also warned against fooling around near water — a lesson that doesn't seem to have been picked up by generations Z and Alpha, given the horrible toll of teenagers who have drowned during the heatwaves. Another film told children not to wander off with strangers in the park. You could sensibly update that today with the message: "Don't talk to accounts you don't know on Roblox."

> I grew up absolutely terrified of fire, thanks to Charley the cat

But there isn't anyone left to update the Charley films. They were produced by the Central Office of Information (COI), a branch of government founded in 1946 as the successor to the wartime Ministry of Information, with centralised responsibility for government advertising campaigns.

In 2011, the Cameron government announced that the COI would shut the following year. This was a money-saving exercise: the COI had a budget of £500 million and the coalition was out to cut, baby, cut. It was also an ideological call. A government issuing official diktats to citizens about their behaviour just seemed a bit old-hat in the 2010s. Cameron preferred the softly-softly approach of the Behavioural Insights Team, aka the Nudge Unit, which aimed to promote good conduct by more subtle means.

A lot of the COI's output was, like the Charley Says series, aimed at children. There was the deeply scarring short film *Dark and Lonely Water*, with Donald Pleasance as the spirit of water, describing his plans to capture and kill unwary children. My personal nightmare fuel was the one in which a boy broke into an electricity substation to reclaim his Frisbee and got fried to death (we were shown the video on rainy playtimes at school).

There were also ads aimed at adults. The COI taught the public how to stay safe on escalators, the proper use of the hard shoulder and what to do in a nuclear attack (the Protect and Survive campaign). It produced the "Don't Die of Ignorance" Aids campaign. In collaboration with Keep Britain Tidy, it promoted a hugely successful anti-littering message.

In the absence of the COI, individual government departments can produce their own advertising campaigns. But without a centralised agency to push the messages, nothing has the same punch. Mobile phone alerts, like the one that startled us at 7pm on Friday, lack narrative force. The old COI films could be melodramatic, and even kitschy sometimes, but you remembered them.

> We should aggressively shame people who drop rubbish or fly tip

We could badly use a COI right now. Every time you open a social media app, you should be exposed to a harrowing government-backed warning about the danger of naked flames in drought-stricken areas. When this hateful summer is over, the emphasis should switch to a message of aggressively shaming people who drop rubbish or fly tip.

After that, a revived COI could bring back motorway education: someone needs to get through to the stubborn minority of drivers who believe the middle lane is the perfect place for coasting along at 65mph. And don't forget cyclists: there is an alarming number of people who seem to think that headphones and no helmet are sensible attire for weaving through traffic.

Perhaps you think all of these things come under the heading of "just good sense", and the public should be trusted to do the reasonable thing without needing paternalistic government propaganda to instruct them. The public, however, does not work like that. The public, taken as a whole, is capable of being very stupid indeed.

Even if most people are rational most of the time, it only takes one idiot with a lighter to cause disaster. Mass public information campaigns like the ones the COI produced not only showed people the right way to act, they also established the idea that, if you didn't act that way, you had put yourself outside acceptable society. That was their true power.

In the absence of the COI or an equivalent government agency, rubbish is piling up on streets, drivers are witlessly making motorways more dangerous and apparently sensible men are smoking in the middle of fields full of kindling. Like a recalcitrant toddler, the public sometimes needs to be told off before it causes an accident, and I can't do it all by myself.

Janice Turner is away

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Regional inequality in A-level results

Sir, The public exam results showed that more students are studying demanding subjects ("Boys pull further ahead in record year for maths", Aug 14) and are achieving highly, both of which are commendable. However, the rise in the proportion of A-levels awarded A*, which has increased from 7.7 per cent in 2019 to 9.6 per cent this summer, should prompt ongoing vigilance that the top grade genuinely means exceptional attainment.

More concerning than creeping grade inflation is the growing regional disparity. The answer to this is not to lower standards, but to ensure that more children have the opportunities necessary to fulfil their potential.

Dr Michael Gray
Executive headmaster, Hereford Cathedral School

Sir, The most striking feature of your listing of A-level results is the complete absence of schools from the north in the top rankings — there are none further north than Birmingham in the top 50. The self-styled King of the North might like to reflect on why this is.

Paul Hainsworth
Esher, Surrey

Sir, My late father, the senior partner of a well-established London law firm, seldom employed graduates with law degrees. He was much more inclined to engage graduates with other degrees — first, because they had a wider education outside the law and second, because within a few months they would be more knowledgeable about the law than law graduates straight out of university.

Jonathan Carey
Weston, Hants

High street revival

Sir, Bravo to Sir Stuart Lipton for his article on recreating our high streets ("Swap shops for homes to revitalise our high streets", Aug 13). His vision is of spaces full of variety, where people can live, enjoy and contribute. It should be essential reading for town planners. Surely we should take one high street and do just this. Why not?

Carole Lee
London SW1

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Corrections and clarifications

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Climate change denial and UK's duty to adapt

Sir, Your leading article ("Cooler Heads", Aug 13) notes that Britain's carbon emissions contribute only 1 per cent of the global total. However, more than 30 countries around the world also claim they represent a tiny fraction of global carbon emissions and therefore the responsibility to cut them rests with other, bigger nations. Those countries combined represent more than 32 per cent of global CO_2 — that's more than China. Adapting to climate change is vital and we cannot do that without also cutting emissions to net zero and mitigating the damage. Neither the UK nor any country should shirk this responsibility.

It is also important to note heat and cold deaths are very different and would require different mitigation strategies — heat-related deaths are often preventable and current strategy is not sufficient.

Dr Chloe Brimicombe
Department of Social Policy and Intervention, University of Oxford

Sir, There is a difference between denier and sceptic, although Hugo Rifkind appears to use the words interchangeably ("Where are all those climate deniers now?", Aug 13), just as many conflate weather and climate. There is no doubt the climate is changing — the question is why. Careful research has proved that temperature increases precede a rise in atmospheric CO_2. Other factors include sunspot activity, cosmic ray impingement and volcanic eruptions. Recently it has been shown that reducing cloud cover significantly reduces heat reflection, ironic as some of that reduction follows the drop in air pollutants such as sulphur dioxide. The rise in atmospheric CO_2, still way below the levels in past eras, has led to the greening of large parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr Andrew Bamji
Rye, E Sussex

Sir, In answer to Hugo Rifkind, we "climate deniers" have not gone anywhere. But to be clear, we never did deny climate change. After all, climate has changed considerably since an ice sheet covered much of Britain, and that warming was not caused by mankind's emissions. Whether the present warming is just another natural climate fluctuation or is caused by the so-called greenhouse effect should be a matter of scientific debate, yet human influence is treated as a fact and not worthy of discussion.

Dr Michael Ridd
London SW18

Sir, Hugo Rifkind asks where all the climate sceptics are now. Sadly, there is no shortage of them on Essex county council where the newly elected Reform councillors cancelled the county's net zero policies. In justification, they deployed the full set of climate denier excuses, namely that climate change has been happening for millions of years, there is no point in the people of Essex contributing their small share towards any global reduction in CO_2 emissions, and they couldn't understand the science.

David Belsham
Terling, Essex

Sir, If Hugo Rifkind is correct that denial is now being replaced by climate fatalism, a comprehensive plan of mitigation and adaptation is required. Carefully sited tree planting of appropriate species in urban locations will be of enormous benefit to future generations.

Gareth Wardell
Former HM Forestry Commissioner, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire

Zero-hours defence

Sir, Terance Hart (letter, Aug 14) says: "Zero-hours contracts ... are a form of exploitation of poor people by incompetent employers." My husband's business is an exemplary employer with more than 20 years' experience of using zero-hours contracts to employ young people aged between 18 and 25 — the youth job market we need to support. These contracts offer the flexibility often desired by workers wanting variety, needing to gain experience or juggling caring responsibilities.

It is perfectly possible to use these contracts fairly and effectively under current employment law. The proposed legislation is using a sledgehammer to crack a nut, the nut being a few large employers who may have exploited their workers.

Diana Gibbs
Hadleigh, Suffolk

Sir, Any well-run business will ensure the staffing is cost-effective. Perhaps Terance Hart should spend time in a hospitality business to understand the juggling which goes on to ensure the correct number of staff are on duty. Variables such as seasonality, weather and events such as weddings mean different numbers of staff need to work each day. Many employees are delighted when more hours are offered, but some choose to turn down the extra income; this flexibility ensures a happy team. Businesses cannot afford to pay the wages of a big team during the inevitable quiet periods. The business would surely fail, and the employer would be blamed for the loss of all jobs.

Carolyn Armstrong
Proprietor, The Headland Hotel, Newquay, Cornwall

Safety on trains

Sir, After the train derailment near Lewes ("Houses burn and train derails on hottest day", Aug 14), I wondered why railway passengers still travel without any form of restraint. We are legally required to wear seatbelts in cars and coaches, and passengers on aircraft are required to wear them for take-off, landing and whenever conditions demand. When a train derails or overturns, passengers can be thrown violently from their seats — surely some of these injuries could be reduced by properly designed restraints. Rail travel is rightly regarded as extremely safe, but accidents happen, and when they do the consequences can be severe.

Dudley Pound
West Bridgford, Notts

ADHD diagnosis

Sir, A diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder requires not just the symptoms Max Pemberton describes ("I'm a doctor — I was diagnosed with ADHD. Here's why I don't accept it", Aug 14). It requires "clear evidence of ... [interference] with social, academic or occupational functioning". On the basis of his article, Pemberton is unlikely to have ADHD and perhaps that is why the medication did not work. No competent clinician tells a nine-year-old that this is "simply who he is and always will be" because it would be absurd. However, online diagnostic services may lack engagement with (and follow-up of) their patients, leaving themselves open to criticism.

Paul McArdle
Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist; Newcastle-upon-Tyne

BEWARE OF ADVERTISING YOUR RIVALS

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 16, 1926

The announcement of the Postmaster-General that he is availing himself of the powers given him by the Economy Act 1926 to introduce post-mark advertising on letters has excited considerable interest in commercial circles, and speculation as to its value for the purposes of raising public revenue.

The use by the State of the cancellation stamp on letters to make requests and appeals to the public is no new thing. During the war extensive use of this medium was made by the Government for the circulation of the appeals "Buy War Savings Certificates" and "Buy War Loan". The British Empire Exhibition at Wembley was similarly advertised. It was estimated that "Visit Wembley" appeared on 1,000,000,000 letters during the two years of the exhibition. "Post early in the day" is familiar at Christmas. The post-mark is much more used in the Dominions for communicating with the public than in this country. For example, just now the envelopes of letters from Canada contain the injunction "Help prevent forest fires".

But this new departure of the Postmaster-General is the first use to be made of the stamping machines for private advertising. It is expected that the paid advertisements will begin to appear on envelopes and letters towards the end of the month. Messrs Frank Mason and Co, advertising agents, were given the contract for conducting the business side of the scheme, after tenders had been invited by the Post Office. The contract has a provision for its termination in the event of the scheme not proving a success. The prospects are said to be favourable; a large number of inquiries were received the same day from town clerks of holiday resorts, railway companies and business firms, and several orders were given.

Guarantees as to circulation are to be given in tens or hundreds of millions, and advertisements may be continued for a week or a month, or longer in certain areas. They will consist of a few words in plain block letters, with ornamental designs in some cases. One objection to the scheme is not without an element of humour. The envelopes of business firms may, in the working-out of the scheme, be stamped with an advertisement recommending a rival product or commodity.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

By-election farce

Sir, The Clacton by-election result tells us a great deal ("Watchdog to interview Farage over £5m 'gift' after by-election", Aug 14). The fact that Count Binface received nearly 10,000 votes demonstrates that, despite what Nigel Farage says, many voters do care about his "gift", his behaviour and his regular absence from the constituency. Now that he has been returned, wasting almost £250,000 of taxpayers' money in this process, I look forward to the resumption of the parliamentary investigations.

Dr Anthony Harris
Cambridge

Upstairs downstairs

Sir, Regarding the benefits of climbing stairs ("Living longer, one step at a time", Aug 13), every lift should have a hazard notice on the door aimed at everyone going up fewer than three flights. But stairs have their dangers too — everyone over 60 should put up a second banister, only to be used on the way down, to reduce the risk of a fall, which can be life-changing.

Sir Muir Gray
Oxford Longevity Project

Sir, One of my abiding memories of working for Norfolk county council on the sixth floor of their County Hall building was the printed reminder on each floor — "Remember, this is your free gym". I ensured I climbed the stairs twice a day but did take the lift on the other occasions.

Lesley Smith
Gorleston, Norfolk

Thirsty trees

Sir, Further to "Tree-cooling effect" (letter, Aug 13), how come that despite the drought, trees at present are in magnificent glory? And pine cones have never been so prolific, much to the chagrin of fellow golfers.

Bob Green
Bourne End, Bucks

Sir, With the transition to much hotter, drier summers, one wonders how much longer local councils can justify hanging baskets and floral displays which need to be watered at least three times a week — perhaps even daily in weather as dry as this year's. Maybe if councils spent as much time watering their newly planted trees, which are often forgotten, they could be forgiven, but alas they do not.

Marcus Allweathers
Andover, Hants

Cut to the chase

Sir, The struggle to control wild boar populations across Europe ("Sun, sea and squealing as boars go wild on beaches of French Riviera", Aug 14) gives us an excellent opportunity to help out our friends across the Channel. We should offer to take as many as we can — *civet de sanglier aux châtaignes* and *marcassin à la sauce grand veneur* are delicious and would make welcome additions to menus in the UK.

David Lowe
Blagdon, N Somerset

Sir, I was stopped on the balcony path above the French Riviera by *les chasseurs*. As I was keen to complete my walk, they gave me a high-visibility cap, with the reassurance: "Now we don't shoot you."

Johnny Longley
Tisbury, Wilts

Daily Universal Register

The Edinburgh International Book Festival begins; staff from the RMT union go on strike on the East Midlands Railway.

Birthdays today

The Princess Royal, *pictured*, 76; **Abiy Ahmed**, prime minister of Ethiopia, Nobel peace prize (2019), 50; **Ben Affleck**, actor, *Air* (2023), and film-maker, *Good Will Hunting* (1997), 54; **Prof Sir Simon Baron-Cohen**, clinical psychologist, director, Autism Research Centre, University of Cambridge, 68; **Lord (Neil) Brailsford**, senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 72; **Richard Deacon**, abstract sculptor, Turner prize winner (1987), 77; **Melinda French Gates**, philanthropist, 62; **John Gilhooly**, artistic and executive director, Wigmore Hall, chairman, Royal Philharmonic Society (2010-24), 53; **Lord (Simon) Hart of Tenby**, Conservative MP (2010-24), secretary of state for Wales (2019-22), 63; **Jennifer Lawrence**, actress, The Hunger Games film series (2012-15), 36; **Sir Tony Robinson**, actor, *Blackadder* (1983-89), and presenter, *Time Team* (1994-2014), 80; **Jack Russell**, cricketer, England (1987-98), and artist, 63; **Sir Robert Syms**, Conservative MP (1997-24), lord commissioner (HM Treasury, whip, 2016-17), 70; **Carol and Sir Mark Thatcher Bt**, 73; **Lord (William) Waldegrave of North Hill**, Conservative MP (1979-97), provost of Eton College (2009-24), 80; **Sir Roger Wright**, chief executive, Britten Pears Arts (2014-24, Aldeburgh Festival), controller, BBC Radio 3 (1998-2014), 70.

Birthdays tomorrow

Madonna, *pictured*, singer-songwriter, *Like a Virgin* (1984), and actress, 68; **Barrington Black**, circuit judge (1993-2005), justice of the Supreme Court of Gibraltar (2012-14), 94; **Frankie Boyle**, comedian, 54; **James Cameron**, film director, *Titanic* (1997), 72; **Shiv Chanderpaul**, cricketer, West Indies (1994-2015), 52; **Ben Cowell**, director-general, Historic Houses, 54; **John Craven**, TV presenter, *Countryfile* (since 1989), 86; **Lady (Diane) Dodds of Duncairn**, Democratic Unionist Party politician, 68; **Katharine Hamnett**, fashion designer, 79; **Ulrika Jonsson**, presenter, *Shooting Stars* (1995-2002, 2009-11), 59; **Evanna Lynch**, actress, Luna Lovegood in the Harry Potter films (2007-11), 35; **Dame Clare Marchant**, vice-chancellor, University of Gloucestershire, 54; **Sir Trevor McDonald**, presenter, ITV *News at Ten* (2001-05, 2008), 87; **Micheál Martin**, taoiseach, leader of Fianna Fáil, 66; **Sir David Natzler**, clerk of the House of Commons (2015-19), 74; **Jannik Sinner**, tennis player, world No 1, 25; **Prof Sir David Spiegelhalter**, statistician, 73; **Sir John Standing**, actor, *The Eagle Has Landed* (1976), 92; **Jeff Thomson**, cricketer, Australia (1972-85), 76; **Jennifer Tiramani**, theatre designer, principal, The School of Historical Dress, 72; **Dame Ijeoma Uchegbu**, professor of pharmaceutical nanoscience, UCL, and president, Wolfson College, Cambridge, 66; **Frank-Steffen Walliser**, chairman and chief executive, Bentley Motors, 57.

On this day

In **1040** King Duncan I of Scotland was killed in battle against his first cousin and rival Macbeth.

The last word

"Don't look back. Something may be gaining on you." Leroy "Satchel" Paige, baseball player, in Collier's (June 13, 1953)

Dustbin of History

Nigel Farage has won his by-election contest against a man posing as a bin, but he has done nothing to allay concerns about his financial affairs

Two of the record 34 candidates in Thursday's Clacton by-election have cause for satisfaction this weekend. The first is Count Binface — the comic Jon Harvey, posing as an interstellar warrior-cum-dustbin, who managed to win 27 per cent of the vote, a truly historic achievement for a novelty candidate. The big parties' decision to boycott the election meant the leader of the Recyclons did indeed become a receptacle, for the votes of those unimpressed with the decision by Nigel Farage, the MP, to call a snap by-election in protest against the supposed persecution of himself and his party by the "establishment". The other, of course, is Mr Farage, who took 63 per cent of the vote, increasing his tally from the 2024 general election by a thousand. With a turnout of 44 per cent, the Reform UK leader could be forgiven for believing that his impetuous stunt, costing the taxpayer £250,000, has paid off.

Incensed by inquiries about donations, gifts and support-in-kind, Mr Farage flounced out of the House of Commons last month, promising to submit himself to the judgment of his constituents. But instead of facing off against candidates from the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats he found himself in a life-and-death struggle with a bin. No matter how sizeable the vote, his victory is a pyrrhic one. The shine has come off the great insurgent of British politics. Reform now lags behind Labour in the polls, and Mr Farage's personal ratings have tanked. Much of Clacton may still adore him, but that sentiment is not shared by the country at large.

Now that Mr Farage is an MP again, the inquiry into his finances, put on ice during the by-election campaign, can resume. The parliamentary standards commissioner duly announced yesterday that his investigation into a £5 million "gift" to Mr Farage from Christopher Harborne, a Thai-based crypto-tycoon, would continue. There will also be an investigation into support rendered by George Cottrell, a convicted fraudster. Some in Reform UK imagined that the by-election might stymie such inquiries. They were mistaken. In fact, the vote has served only to emphasise Mr Farage's tetchiness on the issue of money.

At a rally of his supporters after the count, Mr Farage said his one "sin" may have been "I haven't filled in a piece of paper". That may be a hint that he did not fully declare all his income before the general election. His devotees will accept that flippant dismissal, but the standards commissioner may think otherwise. If he concludes that Mr Farage did break parliamentary rules on financial disclosure — rules that all MPs must follow, irrespective of celebrity status — that raises the prospect of an autumn re-run of the Clacton contest. For that to happen Mr Farage would have to be suspended from the Commons for ten days or more. That penalty could then trigger a recall petition in Clacton to remove him as MP. Count Binface's vote suggests that there are enough disgruntled people there to meet the threshold of 10 per cent of registered voters.

If Mr Farage has indeed failed to declare his interests, he should be open about it. He should adequately explain, without bluster, why he failed to register that £5 million from Mr Harborne. He should also explain why he did not declare any benefits given to him by Mr Cottrell. And he should clear up questions about the source of donations to Reform via Mr Cottrell's mother. These are legitimate matters for any party that aspires to govern. Reform UK has no special exemption from scrutiny, and neither should it.

Mr Farage won in Clacton but the damage to his national standing outweighs that local success. By doubling down and focusing on his base, he risks abandoning the centre ground vital to victory in the country. That may yet consign his and his party's grand ambitions to the dustbin of history.

Don't Turn Away

Five years after the Taliban returned, the UK must not abandon those it left behind

It is five years since the Taliban swept back into Kabul, seizing the presidential palace and signalling the collapse of nearly 20 years of the US-led coalition's presence in the country. At the airport, there was chaos as American and allied personnel — and those Afghans with most reason to fear the return of a vengeful, repressive regime — scrambled for flights out.

For those left behind, the Taliban's authority has in many ways fulfilled pessimists' worst predictions. A recent United Nations report said that 28 million people were in deep poverty, 80 per cent of households were in debt and millions were struggling to access basics such as food and heating. Their plight is compounded by drought, diminishing international aid, and mass returns of refugees from countries such as Iran and Pakistan.

The most explicit harm has been to the rights of women, and this has had negative effects on every aspect of national life. The repression that began in 2021, with a ban on education for girls aged 12 and over, has inexorably worsened. This year, new Taliban decrees legalised child marriage and permitted men to beat their wives — short of causing a fracture, deep bruise or open wound. Women are forbidden to study, work in most professions, leave home without a male relative, uncover their faces outside, speak loudly or laugh in public. Half of the population have been erased from public life and are increasingly unprotected from the most horrifying abuses in private. Some argue that women's rights were not the reason the US toppled the Taliban in 2001, citing instead the regime's links to al-Qaeda terrorism. That is true, but both the US and UK invoked women's freedom as a core mission of the intervention. The first lady, Laura Bush, said: "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women." The latter fight was abandoned with the 2020 US-Taliban Doha deal, which gave no guarantees on women's rights whatsoever.

If that was a US betrayal of all those who supported western values in Afghanistan, the UK is now enacting one of its own. A government scheme to offer sanctuary to 3,000 Afghans who worked with British forces or had their data leaked by the Ministry of Defence — and are at highest risk of reprisals — has been curtailed. Help to leave has been ended, and eligible Afghans have been told they must "self move" to Britain at their own, largely impossible, expense within 12 months or the offer is void. The twist makes a mockery of the original guarantee, and must be reconsidered.

The broader reality is that there is no appetite for more western military intervention in Afghanistan. Taliban rule has effected an airless form of internal stability, in contrast to the carnage in which it played so large a part. It has drastically cut opium production and limited the threat of Islamic State Khorasan, although its links to al-Qaeda remain active. Britain must tread a careful path, keeping diplomatic channels open without normalising a brutal regime. British humanitarian aid to the country — routed away from the Taliban — is falling, but there is a strong argument for bolstering it. Not only would doing so ease suffering, it would also keep alive vital networks that operate apart from the government, especially those bringing aid, healthcare and hidden education to Afghan women and children. The UK must not now turn its face away from those it once so loudly encouraged to hope.

Apply Yourselves

Charities chosen for The Times Christmas Appeal raise money and profiles

In the midst of a sweltering summer the festive season seems an impossibly long way off, but charities wishing to apply for The Times and Sunday Times Christmas Appeal need to prepare their applications now. Last year, readers of this newspaper and its sister title raised more than £850,000 for three charities chosen for coverage in our pages. Applications for the 2026 appeal are now open and must be submitted by Friday, September 11. The unfailing generosity of Times and Sunday Times readers should ensure substantial cash boosts for the chosen organisations, not to mention greatly enhanced public profiles.

Of the three charities usually picked, two will operate mostly in the United Kingdom and one will be a British-registered charity operating overseas. Every charity has a story to tell and we want to hear from those whose origins, missions and challenges will command our readers' attention. Applicants will need to submit ideas for news articles and features to illustrate their work.

There is no typical Times appeal charity. The needs and ills addressed by organisations selected in past years have been many and varied. Allergy education and safety, therapy for suicidal men, the provision of nutritious food for people on low incomes, aid for Afghan families — these are just some of the causes championed by successful past candidates. Last year's appeal was for charities involved in the rehabilitation of offenders, forging mutually beneficial social links between the young and the elderly and the distribution of bicycles to communities in the developing world.

The charitable field is a crowded one, and valuable work done by smaller organisations can be overshadowed. The Times appeal offers a chance for specialist charities to shine, to explain their purpose and the good they do in the world. Apply to: charityappeal@thetimes.co.uk.

Comment

Write to Feedback by emailing feedback@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Domesday Book listing is far from rare — ask Luton

Rob Nash
Feedback

The Open Domesday website shows a map of England in 1086. What is most notable is how little has changed in 940 years. You will probably find marked on it many of your local towns, albeit containing fewer households. Luton, for instance, has 145.

I have Victoria Solt Dennis to thank for nudging me towards this online bounty. "Your article about the proposed warehousing of asylum seekers in the village of Piddington," she wrote, "has provoked me to ask: is there space in The Times Style Guide to note that of the 13,418 places listed in Domesday Book, the vast majority still exist, and villages south of the Ribble and Tees that aren't mentioned in it are actually fairly rare (the northern shires, having been comprehensively trashed by William I a decade or so previously, weren't surveyed).

"Saying that Piddington 'is mentioned in Domesday Book' is not only irrelevant to the situation discussed in the article; it's irrelevant to Piddington altogether. It's a piece of non-information such as estate agents use to give a spurious implication of quaintness and tradition. Please point out to your reporters that Milton Keynes, Stevenage, Basildon and Corby are all mentioned in Domesday too." Victoria wrote from "Gillingham (mentioned in Domesday Book), Kent".

Game of conquers

The land in Gillingham, which was then worth £28 a year, was divided between Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Bishop Odo of Bayeux. Which is most convenient because David Ball of Bristol was wondering "how the Scots, Welsh and Irish would react to the assertion in your Saturday Times Magazine piece on the Bayeux Tapestry that 'the British Isles were conquered' by William in 1066 and that it was a tale of humiliation for 'the British'."

He added: "Can I suggest you read Norman Davies's masterful history of those isles, and especially p300, where he says when describing modern English attitudes to the conquest: 'It is as if Anglo-Saxon England were bordered by an ocean to the north and the west as well as by a channel to the south. The mental planet that is peopled by Alfred and the Danes and Harold and the Conqueror has no place whatsoever for Hywel Dda, for Brian Boru, for Kenneth MacAlpin or Macbeth. The Celtic peoples no doubt inhabit historical planets of their own."

Some of them might, through their telescope, look askance at a cavil from A Webster. "You often report on a restaurant called Ynyshir but I don't think you've ever told us how to pronounce this baffling name. Wineysher? Unsher? Innysher? Do you even know?" I am not a Welsh-speaker but I could make a stab at pronouncing it (Un-iss-heer), if not quite to the satisfaction of a Welsh former colleague who gave me a *roced* for writing a headline that played on the similarity (to the ignorant) between Caerphilly and carefully. As well as being Gareth Ward's restaurant in Ceredigion, Ynyshir is a place in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Ynys means island; Anglesey is Ynys Môn, or Isle of Môn. Opinion is divided on what Môn means; some think it is in essence the same as Man. If you are wondering why a village in the Rhondda valley is named Long Island, it seems ynys can also mean a river meadow or holm. Here endeth the Welsh lesson.

Pitch to the editors

Our reporting on wildfires made Richard King of Macclesfield steam gently. "The latest fire in the New Forest is said by the BBC to cover about 100 hectares, which apparently is better understood by us Times-reading 'thickies' as being the equivalent of 140 football pitches. It's quite a few years since I played football, and even now I prefer to watch rugby. As a result, I'm a bit hazy as to the exact dimensions of a football pitch and so I take exception to the assumption that none of us understands what a hectare, or dare I even mention an acre, is.

"Are you aware of any move afoot to have 'football pitch' listed in the Oxford dictionary as a recognised unit of area as defined by the appropriate standards authority? I hope you will also consider 'double-decker bus' for insertion in the dictionary as a measurement unit." Richard, if I were handed the reins of the OED, all sorts would be afoot. Pray it never happens.

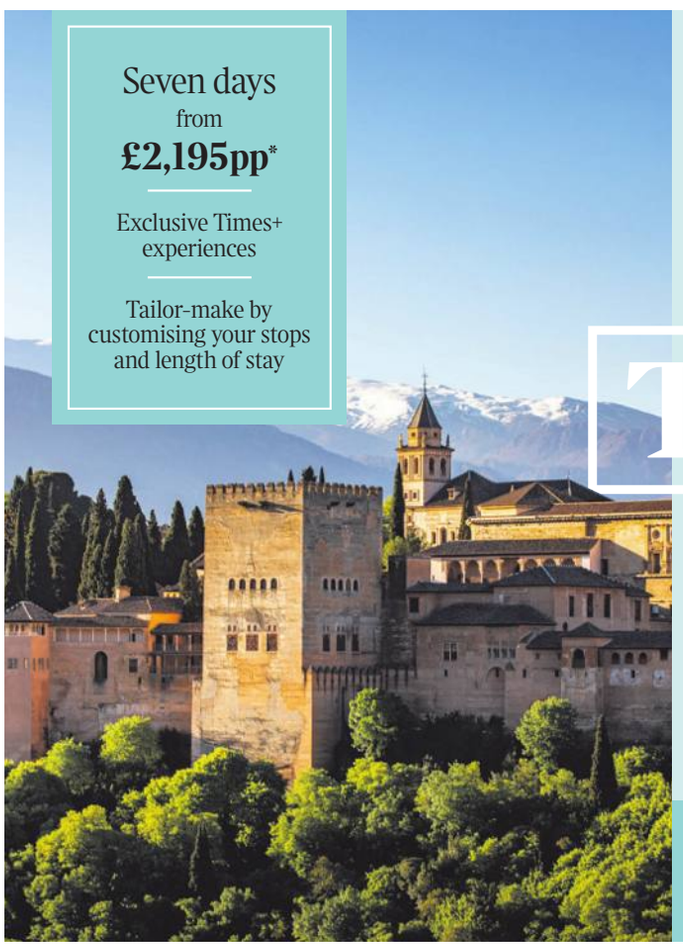
Feedback frequent flyers may know that my favourite web page, perhaps temporarily demoted by Open Domesday, is The Register's online standards converter, with the help of which I can tell you that 100 hectares is 48.13 microWaleses and a statistically insignificant number of DR Congos. Richard will already know a double-decker bus is 65.85 linguine or 4.59 Osmans long. No need to memorise that data: it will all be in my submission to Oxford.

On a similar note, Richard Harries of Cheltenham had "no wish to wade into the debate about 20mph zones but I note one correspondent on your letters page advocated a speed limit of 25mph, 'equating exactly to 40km/h'. This is no doubt a useful approximation, but (to three decimal places) 40km/h is 24.855mph, and 25mph is 40.234km/h." Or, I hardly need add, 0.0004 per cent of the maximum velocity of a sheep in a vacuum.

Stranger than fiction

I can barely convey the joy of finding that even after two weeks off I could still write about Homer. Alison Gibson of Dundee had observed: "The *Odyssey* appears in your bestseller lists as non-fiction. As there are so many characters and events in the tale that cannot be true, can you explain why?"

Mirabile dictu, as Homer would not have said, three *Odysseys*, an *Iliad* and the classics prof Emily Wilson's wine-dark musings make up half the non-fiction top ten. The old bard, or bardess, or barding collective, inventor of the unreliable narrator, would have been most amused.



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There was a heatwave in August 1932 as the Rev Harold Davidson conducted his final service as rector of Stiffkey in Norfolk. He'd been found guilty by a church court of immorality and was defrocked that year. It's possible that he was unfairly treated — it was claimed, for example, that he had embraced a young woman in a Chinese restaurant. What a rotter. However, in one way he proved to be something of a pioneer. To restore his reputation, and indeed to make a living, he went into showbiz.

He started by exhibiting himself in a barrel on Blackpool seafront and later stretched out in a coffin while being prodded in the bottom by a mechanical imp armed with a giant toasting fork. This change of career did not end well. While recreating Daniel in the lions' den with real lions, he was mauled to death.

Despite that unhappy example, the world of entertainment has given a second chance to many people who have been ejected from their careers. When the Conservative MP Neil Hamilton lost his seat after the cash for questions scandal, he formed something of a double act with his wife, Christine, who turned out to be a natural performer. They appeared together on *Have I Got News For You*, were interviewed by Louis Theroux and trod the boards in panto.

David Mellor, the former culture secretary, lost his seat in 1997 after a kiss and tell scandal and allegations that he had accepted a free holiday. He moved into broadcasting, hosting a football phone-in and shows on Radio 3 and Classic FM. Perhaps the finest example of someone whose reputation benefited from a career change is Michael Portillo. The former cabinet minister was never involved in scandal but in a phrase once applied to Gladstone he was "the rising hope of stern and unbending Tories".

When he lost his seat in 1997, there was an element of rejoicing. Quite a large element actually: "Were you still up for Portillo?" Now he's not only the nation's best-loved trainspotter but something of a fashion icon, if you happen to like bright orange trousers.

Be warned, though: you can't carry this off if you already work in entertainment. Phillip Schofield lost his job on ITV's *This Morning* but was cast away on a desert island the following year for a Channel 5 reality show. Did he show some contrition? No, he moaned about how unfairly he'd been treated. The truth is, once a public figure has been disgraced we don't want to see them again for a very long time.

Phil would have been wiser to follow the example of John Profumo. In 1963, all was going well for the secretary for war in Macmillan's government. He was married to the actress Valerie Hobson and having an affair with a 19-year-old.

But that all fell apart when it was revealed that Christine Keeler was also sleeping with a Russian diplomat. Profumo disappeared from public life and devoted himself to charity work.

Luckily for him, the dawn of *I'm A Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!* was still four decades away.

Feeling the heat? Get yourself a nice pair of orange trousers

Roland White

Emerging artefacts are more like bad omens

Climate change has led to all sorts of important relics surfacing from rivers and receding ice, but it's destroying others

Ben Macintyre

@BENMACINTYRE1

ANDREJ ISAKOVIC/AFP/GETTY

Low water in the Danube means the remains of a scuttled Nazi fleet are re-emerging. Easter Island's statues are eroding

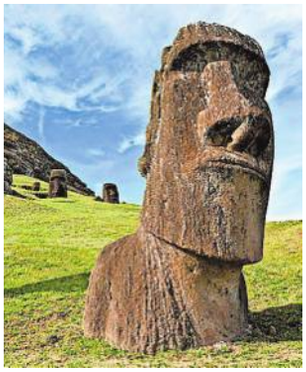
In the summer of 1944, Rear Admiral Paul-Willy Zieb, the commander of Germany's Black Sea fleet, launched Operation Wassernixe (water nymph), a desperate attempt to save his ships by sailing 1,240 miles (1,995 km) along the Danube to the safety of Austria.

Nazi troops were retreating in chaos from the Balkans. Soviet and Romanian forces were closing in, ruthlessly harrying Zieb's fleeing 15-mile convoy of 242 ships, carrying 4,000 men. When Zieb learnt that the Red Army had captured the Iron Gates, a steep gorge controlling access to the Danube, he knew the situation was hopeless. The beleaguered admiral gave orders to scuttle the fleet to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. On September 6, the surviving 172 ships were deliberately sunk at a point on the river near Prahovo in Serbia.

An entire German fleet vanished to the bottom of the Danube, never to be seen again — until this roasting summer. The waters of the great river have now sunk so low that Zieb's ghost ships have emerged from the sludge. Dozens of shipwrecks can now be seen lying where they foundered more than 80 years ago.

Hitler's lost fleet is not the only element of hidden history to emerge from the drought-stricken Danube. In recent weeks, the drying river mud has also surrendered the bodies of two German soldiers complete with a Wehrmacht motorcycle and identification tags, an unexploded 1,500lb British bomb and the well-preserved remains of a young woolly mammoth, including both tusks, near the village of Ryahovo in northern Bulgaria.

One of the grimmer ironies of climate change is the way artefacts that should have been lost for ever are emerging from the past, a strange historical bounty produced by fire, flood, tempest, drought and the receding ice. The wildfires in France this summer have exploded shells left over from the Second World War. Melting glaciers have exposed Ötzi the tattooed Copper Age hunter, murdered in the Alps and preserved in the ice along with his bow and arrow, bearskin cap and genetic lactose intolerance.



From the hitherto impenetrable Norwegian snows have emerged 1,300-year-old skiing equipment, arrows with bone tips and a lost network of mountain paths used for Viking hiking. Fierce storms stripped thousands of tonnes of sand from a beach in Cardigan Bay, revealing an ancient, petrified forest submerged beneath the sea some 4,000 years ago. When Rome experienced its worst drought in 70 years, the water in the Tiber fell so low that the remains of Nero's Bridge, partially demolished in the 3rd century, became visible again.

Successive heatwaves have revealed fresh dinosaur tracks in dried Texas riverbeds and the Dolmen of Guadalperal, known as Spain's Stonehenge, a megalithic standing stone monument in the receding waters of the Valdecañas reservoir on the Tagus River.

When drought dried up Iraq's Mosul Dam reservoir, it exposed ruins from an ancient Bronze Age city, with walls 22ft (7m) high that were once decorated with painted murals. The palace of Kemune was a centre of the Mittani Empire, a kingdom that ruled portions of Syria and northern Mesopotamia from the 15th century to the 14th century BC. Ten clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform, one of the earliest forms of writing, are now being deciphered by experts at the University of Heidelberg.

But these astonishing discoveries are the thinnest of silver linings on a vast and looming cloud, because climate change is destroying far more history than it reveals. Across the world, heritage sites are under threat from a warming environment, changing weather patterns, rising seas and shrinking ice.

The Easter Island statues (moai) are threatened by aggressive coastal erosion caused by extreme storms and rising sea levels. Salt crystallisation within the ancient mud bricks of Babylonian ruins, the consequence of prolonged drought, is cracking the structures from the inside out. These buildings survived 4,000 years, wars and pestilence, but are starting to crumble as the world heats up.

In the Maldives, rising sea levels endanger the 900-year-old Koagannu mosques and cemetery complex, and in the UK drying peat soils are introducing oxygen to underground layers and rotting previously preserved artefacts such as leather shoes, wooden tools and textiles.

Indonesian rock art in the Maros-Pangkep region is flaking off the limestone cave walls as fluctuating temperatures and higher humidity cause salt crystals in the rock to expand and contract.

The very concept of "historic preservation" was framed in 19th-century Britain, when railway lines and stations sprawled across the country, threatening ancient castles, Norman churches, Bronze Age fortifications and other vestiges of earlier societies. In 1833, the ruins of Berkhamsted Castle became the first officially protected historic site.

For the next two centuries, the principle of proactively defending human artefacts on behalf of all mankind became accepted worldwide. But where once such places and things merely had to be defended against the march of time, the ravages of conflict or the destructiveness of human development, today they need protection against the world itself — the increasingly savage heat, tides, wind and rain.

> One exposed 'hunger stone' reads: 'If you see me, then weep'

An unprecedented historical race is under way as a changing environment prompts a slew of new discoveries while laying waste to the past.

During the Middle Ages, people living on the banks of the River Elbe chiseled inscriptions on to stones on the riverbed whenever drought struck and the water level dropped. These "hunger stones" offered grim portents. The river at Decin in Czechia recently fell so low that it exposed an inscription carved by a 15th-century predecessor of today's climate activists, darkly noting that the exposed riverbed was an indication of coming calamity: "If you see me, then weep."

Every fresh revelation produced by climate change is simultaneously fascinating and terrifying, a discovery and an admonishment. The drowned hulks of the Nazi fleet, Ötzi the iceman's preserved remains, Spain's Stonehenge emerging from the waters: each offers a new glimpse into the past, and a warning. If you see me, then weep.

Comment

WEEKEND ESSAY

The death of reading puts the world in a perilous place

Books and newspapers are increasingly giving way to social media content as the habit of reading fades. This isn't just dumbing down, it's a threat to democracy, writes **James Marriott**

In one of my favourite clips of Donald Trump, the president is asked about the Bible. Which is his favourite verse, a journalist wants to know. "I wouldn't want to get into it", Trump says. "The Bible means a lot to me, but I don't want to get into specifics." The interviewer presses him on a question that seems easier: does he prefer the Old or the New Testament? "Probably equal," Trump says. "I think it's just incredible." Donald Trump is not a reader — of the Bible or, we are reliably informed, of any book. According to his former economic adviser, Gary Cohn, "Trump won't read anything — not one-page memos, not the brief policy papers, nothing." Instead, he gets most of his news from screens: Fox News and Truth Social are favourites. This preference explains a lot about the chaos of our present politics.

The president is hardly alone in his allergy to the written word. Reading is in decline everywhere. Most widely cited are a series of reports from universities suggesting that students are increasingly unable to read the books their lecturers assign to them. According to one professor, his students were "intimidated by anything over ten pages". And this is more than merely the sort of thing professors have always said about their students.

The statistics are concerning. Literacy, according to a remarkable recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, is "declining or stagnating" in most developed countries. A study of the leisure habits of nearly a quarter of a million Americans found that the number who spent time reading on a typical day (including newspapers, magazines and audiobooks) fell by 40 per cent between 2003 and 2023. In Britain, a 2024 survey by the charity the Reading Agency found that more than a third of adults describe themselves as "lapsed readers" — that, is they used to read regularly but no longer do. And the declines in reading are starkest among the young. According to data from the National Literacy Trust, children's reading rates are now the lowest on record. And though publishers' profits remain robust, book sales by volume have decreased or flatlined in the 21st century and library use is in steep long-term decline. It has been suggested that the publishing industry is ever more reliant for its survival on a committed hard core of "super-readers"; 80 per cent of books are read by 20 per cent of adults.

It is not hard to guess what is going on. The big culprit is the smartphone, which became widespread in the early 2010s. Smartphones are designed to be addictive, using an array of content-recommendation algorithms, notifications and endlessly scrolling feeds of content to keep your attention fixed almost permanently on the screen. Phones shatter the concentration required for deep reading. And this is far from a problem confined to TV-addicted presidents and distractible students. A few years ago, even the novelist Howard Jacobson admitted: "I can't read any more as much as I used to. My concentration has been shot by this bloody screen." Many of us no longer even read on screens. In recent years, and especially since TikTok took off around 2019, our culture has been deluged by a new medium: short-form video. Where people once used smartphones to read news articles, they use them to spend hours scrolling through a dazzling stream of videos, many of them only a few seconds long. More than 40 per cent of young adults regularly get their news from TikTok.

The decline of reading is about more than the fading of a pleasant hobby. It is one of the most important trends of our time. We are moving from a literate culture based on the written word to a visual one dominated by moving images. The argument of my forthcoming book, *The New Dark Ages*, is that anyone wanting to understand what is going wrong with our democracy must pay attention to this fact. Many factors shape democracy's 21st-century troubles, but I don't think we should be surprised that an age of declining literacy is also one of democratic retreat. According to the grim statistics supplied by the website Our World in Data, the number of people who have democratic rights declined from 3.9 billion to 2.2 billion people between 2016 and 2024.

Political discourse that was once conducted in print — with its remarkable capacity for sustaining logical thought and extended argument — now takes place in the moronic inferno of social media. In the fragmented, trivialised and angry new world that is being shaped by the smartphone, conspiracy theories and mad ideas spread with terrifying fertility. If our politicians seem lightweights and our public discourse trivial to the point of dysfunction, it is in large part because books and newspapers have been replaced by ubiquitous screens.

Democracy and literacy have gone hand in hand from the very beginning. For almost all of human history, literacy was largely restricted to an elite minority. The power of the autocratic monarchs who ruled Europe before mass literacy rested on their monopoly of knowledge. "Information about the inner workings of the power system was not supposed to circulate under the Old Regime," writes the historian Robert Darnton. "Politics was the king's business." Cardinal Richelieu, the architect of French absolutism, thought (and most of history's dictators have tended to agree with him) that learned citizens were dangerous — they would "exhibit pride and assumption" and "would not render obedience".

At its peak, newspaper readership was near saturation point in Britain. Above right, Donald Trump gets nearly all his news from screens and is a master of social media. Below, El Salvador's Nayib Bukele epitomises the new crop of personalist leaders

The spread of literacy in the 18th century was a powerful catalyst for democracy and a big problem for absolutist monarchs who desired to rule without scrutiny or opposition. As literacy spread and books and newspapers multiplied, ordinary people could read for the first time about the government's catastrophic finances, disastrous foreign wars and extravagant spending. And more voices were drawn into political debates.

These new readers and writers began to develop increasingly sophisticated and critical ideas about politics. The watchmaker's son Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book *The Social Contract* ringingly announced that "man is born free and is everywhere in chains", and then went on to argue that political authority was bestowed not by divine right but by the consent of the people. In *Common Sense*, the corset-maker's son Thomas Paine argued against the principle of hereditary power, and for revolution against tyrannical government. It might be going too far to say (as ambitious historians once liked to) that Rousseau and Paine's books triggered respectively the French and American revolutions. But both works were enormously politically influential. Crucially, both Rousseau and Paine were men whose voices and ideas would have counted for nothing in the age before widespread literacy.

These books were also symptomatic of a new critical attitude that came into being with

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the spread of literacy. Books and newspapers not only spread information, they change the way we think. "To engage [with] the written word," wrote the media theorist Neil Postman, "means to follow a line of thought, which requires considerable powers of classifying, inference making and reasoning." When you make a written argument you must set out your ideas logically, supply evidence and explain your conclusions. And readers have your arguments fixed in front of them, allowing them to submit them to closer critical analysis. Reading, it's easy to forget, is a remarkably sophisticated cognitive activity. As the neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf explains, when we read deeply we perform a series of complex mental processes, including "connecting background knowledge to new information, making analogies, drawing inferences, examining truth value, passing over into the perspectives of others ... and integrating everything into critical analysis". Literacy fosters more critical and abstract thinking, helping us to generalise about the world and to analyse it logically.

Papers cultivated political thought

Observing the spread of print in rural Britain, the Edwardian writer George Bourne noticed that even cheap newspapers were helping to cultivate more sophisticated political thinking in poor communities. Bourne noticed that newspapers could help a citizen to see "the general aspect of questions which, but for the papers, he would only know by his individual experience from the inside". "All unawares," he wrote, "the people fall into the momentous habit of thinking about abstract ideas." Newspapers and books joined the dots between apparently disconnected events and fragments of gossip, helping readers to see their problems in abstract, systemic and political terms. These new readers were able to consider issues such as unemployment not as inexplicable local tragedies that arrived from out of a clear blue sky but as complex, explicable multicausal issues that affected everyone and required sophisticated solutions.

Certainly, working-class politicians throughout the 20th century were convinced that literacy would be central to their political success. In Britain, JR Clynes, one of the pioneering generation of autodidact Labour MPs, argued that words were the "mighty levers whereby the power of the whole world could be more evenly and fairly distributed for the benefit of my kind". He was not wrong. It is no accident that democracy as we know it today, in which all adults can vote regardless of sex or class, first arrived in the age of mass literacy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was then that working-class movements, organised and made articulate through print, began to win concessions from their governments in the form of pensions, healthcare, workplace protections and, crucially, voting rights.

So much of the strength of politics in the 19th and 20th centuries was rooted in reading. In the great heyday of mass literacy, newspaper readership was at near saturation point in Britain and America. At one point the city of New York alone had 17 newspapers. The whole story of 20th-century democracy, from Watergate to the Pentagon Papers, is inconceivable without print. And this literate environment shaped every aspect of politics. Well into the 20th century, politicians spoke knowing they would be read as well as heard. Parliamentary speeches were often printed in full in the papers. And, once printed, important speeches were subjected to a detailed analysis. When Churchill was a new MP, his maiden speech was reported extensively in The Times and picked over in the press with an excited attention that approached almost the level of literary criticism.

But as reading declines and more people turn to videos for political information, the literate culture that sustained sophisticated argument and rational debate is crumbling. Almost 300 newspapers in the UK have closed in the 21st century. According to one estimate, there are fewer newspapers in Britain than at any point since the 18th century. Many areas of the UK are "news deserts", where citizens have no access to reliable information about local politics. Studies in America have found that when newspapers disappear citizens vote less, and those who still vote do so more strongly along partisan lines.

> "Where people once used smartphones to read news articles, they increasingly use them to spend hours scrolling through a dazzling stream of short videos

This shift away from a literate culture is even changing parliament. An analysis in The Economist found that the length and sophistication of speeches made in the House of Commons has declined steadily since the 1970s. In 1938, the average speech in parliament was nearly a thousand words long. The length of speeches started to "shrink dramatically" after 2015, "when video functionality appears on Twitter". By 2024, the average speech was 460 words, as MPs increasingly spoke not for the benefit of newspaper reporters but for clips on social media.

What the increasingly ubiquitous medium of short video rewards is not detailed argument and reasoned debate but visual dazzle: conflict, spectacle and emotion. If you want to succeed in 21st-century politics you must become a master of social media and especially of TikTok. On a hyper-competitive video platform where some users may scroll past 260 videos in just over half an hour, there is little space for nuance. Strong imagery and simple solutions do well. Speeches, ideas and complicated arguments do not. Unsurprisingly, there is evidence that TikTok usage seems to correlate with an increased vote share for the far right and populist parties. In both Britain and America, populist candidates easily outperform their over-earnest, speechifying centrist rivals on short-video platforms. Videos by Reform UK's leader, Nigel Farage, attracted almost 14 times as much engagement as those by his mainstream rivals. Restore's leader, Rupert Lowe, does exceptionally well on social media.

Dangerous rise of the personalists

In the new politics being forged by the smartphone, spectacle comes before thought. Donald Trump is a master of screens as well as an addict of them. Officials are appointed not for their ideas or policy experience but according to whether they look the part. The New York Times has reported that Trump spends time "watching videos of potential senior staff members to see how they look". Trump likes his generals to look like they come from "central casting". Often he wants to know not whether a policy will be effective but how it will look on screen. On X, clips of American strikes in the Iran war were set to dramatic music and interspersed with clips from films. It's a disastrous and expensive war, but it looks cool.

Most dangerous for democracy is the fact that screens love personalities. If you want to win people over in print you will need to make an argument and supply evidence. If you want to persuade on screen, charisma is more important. The greatest threat to democracy in the 21st century comes not from an ideology such as communism or fascism but from a political tendency sometimes known as "personalism" — the domination of a country's politics by a single charismatic personality. Donald Trump is an obvious example. Other personalist leaders include Narendra Modi of India or Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey. Nayib Bukele, the leader of El Salvador and the self-proclaimed "world's coolest dictator", runs a slick TikTok filled with images of prisons, soldiers and his glamorous family. He is the most followed world leader on TikTok.

Screens allow strongmen to get close to their followers, to appear in their lives as an everyday presence, even a friend. The aim is not to persuade through rational argument or effective policy but to draw viewers into a cult of personality.

This is a dangerous direction for democracy. At best, this hyper-personal, chaotic and emotional new politics is ineffective at producing good outcomes for citizens. At worst it offers dangerous opportunities for charismatic demagogues. Charles Duncan was another of the pioneering and highly literate Labour politicians of the early 20th century. As he remarked, "the unread man has a narrow outlook, and easily goes astray; he is the sport of political tricksters and the tool for all knaves".

James Marriott's book The New Dark Ages: The End of Reading and the Dawn of a Post-Literate Society is published by Bodley Head on September 3

Flower power: Nmoye Dele joins other women at the Project Obutonde garden

Gather to grow

From repair workshops and community cookouts to rebuilding neighbourhoods, three volunteers show how caring for the planet goes hand in hand with caring for one another – and brings people closer together

Environmental action rarely begins with a grand declaration. More often, somebody notices what could be improved close to home: a river cut off from its neighbourhood, woodland with untapped potential or a patch of ground where food might grow.

Those modest beginnings are at the heart of "It started", a campaign by The National Lottery Community Fund that celebrates practical local ideas that bloom into lasting community projects.

Those who get involved do not necessarily think of themselves as climate campaigners. They may simply be looking for a route into work, a more sustainable way to eat or the opportunity to restore a place they care about.

Yet as these projects develop, the benefits multiply: habitats recover, people gain skills and confidence, and neighbours forge stronger connections. Climate action becomes useful and immediate, rather than a distant ambition.

URBAN RENEWAL

For volunteer Mohammed Alajez, it started with a walk through Hamiltonhill Claypits Local Nature Reserve in Glasgow. It was once a derelict site used for fly-tipping and associated with gangs and drug use – to the extent that local residents would avoid it. But it is now a thriving urban nature reserve, rich in wildlife and cared for by around 50 volunteers.

Through the wider Nature Neighbourhoods project, support from The National Lottery Community Fund has enabled the work to move beyond reliance on volunteers alone, backing a full-time post and a programme of community events and talks.

Nature nurturers: Men in Sheds handymen Norman Laity (left) and Pete Edwards; biodiversity specialist Mohammed Alajez

Born in Palestine and trained in biodiversity, Mohammed had completed a master's degree at the University of Sussex but was unable to return home because of the conflict in Gaza. Following a long period of uncertainty, he was granted the right to remain in Britain and began building a life in Glasgow.

After meeting a volunteer at the Claypits, Mohammed was invited to lead a "walk and talk" about biodiversity. He drew connections between two landscapes that were separated by thousands of miles: Wadi Gaza and the Claypits.

Those who joined him were encouraged to see familiar ground differently. And for Mohammed, it was a chance to put his expertise to use, share knowledge and begin forging a sense of belonging.

A FRESH START

For Nmoye Dele, getting involved with the Oldham community started with a friendly face. She arrived in Britain with her three children, little money, no local support network and uncertainty over her immigration status, following years of upheaval and exploitation. While searching for affordable second-hand furniture, she discovered Support and Action Women's Network (SAWN), a charity supporting black African women and families.

Nmoye accepted an invitation to SAWN's women's group and found the companionship she had been missing. She later joined Project Obutonde, its communal garden, where women grow flowers and vegetables, hold cookouts and spend time together.

Through SAWN, she learnt gardening, cooking and craft skills, sang in the choir and gained the confidence to lead activities. Volunteering eventually became paid work: she is now a media and project co-ordinator, supporting communications, helping women with practical needs and offering the reassurance she once needed. The garden grows food locally, shares knowledge and brings people who might otherwise feel excluded into environmental action. Its success is also measured in friendship, confidence and stability, showing that caring for the planet and caring for one another need not be separate tasks.

> 'Those involved do not think of themselves as climate campaigners'

ON THE MEND

In Bristol, Norman "Nobby" Laity and his friend Jim Black began a community initiative thanks to a shed, a kettle and the conviction that useful objects – and useful skills – should not be discarded. Their Men in Sheds project, run by Ambition Lawrence Weston community centre, invites people to bring in broken household items for repair. If something cannot be fixed, its parts are reused, while repaired items that are not reclaimed can be sold to support the project.

Between 80 and 90 per cent of the timber used at Men in Sheds is reclaimed, often from offcuts that would otherwise go to landfill. What started as one monthly gathering now runs three times a week, with older members sharing practical know-how and younger participants bringing fresh ideas.

People may arrive with a broken lamp, clock or chair, but often stay for the company. The project keeps materials in use and helps households avoid replacement costs. Just as importantly, it offers companionship, purpose and the satisfaction of being useful.

Men in Sheds is part of the wider Community Climate & Nature Action Project, co-ordinated by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership. It is a reminder that climate work need not look like a wind farm or a laboratory – it could look like a repaired table and a room in which nobody has to drink tea alone.

The National Lottery Community Fund supports environmental projects of all shapes and sizes. It offers grants from £300 to over £500,000 and everything in between, through programmes including Awards for All and the Climate Action Fund.

The first step, as these stories suggest, does not have to be grand – it simply has to be taken.

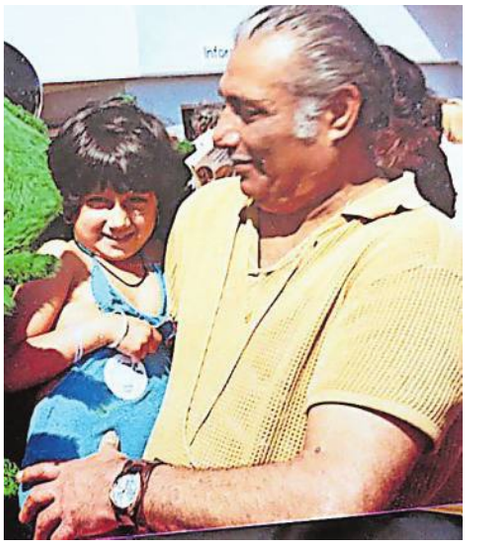
COMMUNITY FUND

To find out more or apply for funding for your environmental project, visit tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

Grandfather's promise to dying soldier

Old documents helped uncover why the Hindu kept a Muslim fast ever after serving in Tobruk, **Tom Whipple** writes

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES GLOSSOP



Vallabhdas Suchak served in the Burma campaign in India and North Africa. He was awarded the Burma Star and Africa Star. Nima Suchak, below, and with her grandfather as a child, right, is sharing his story as part of the Forgotten Army exhibition to celebrate VJ Day today

Each year at Ramadan, Nima Suchak's grandfather would fast. Between dawn and dusk he would, like millions of Muslims, abstain from food and drink. What puzzled her much later, when she remembered this as an adult, was that he was a Hindu. Why, then, did he join the fast?

When, decades after his death, she opened the cardboard box that contained his old documents, what she found caused her to reassess her understanding of his life — and her own place in British history. The answer to the puzzle of his annual fast can be found, she believes, in Tobruk, a dying man, and his six years of service among Empire troops who served in their millions during the Second World War, including in the Far East.

After signing up in Uganda, Vallabhdas Suchak had fought first in north Africa. Allied forces had been battling Rommel's Afrika Korps, moving east and west along a dusty and bitterly contested coast road. Among those troops, aged 17 or 18, Vallabhdas found a comrade dying.

"My grandad went to offer him some water," Nima said. The soldier would not take it. "He said, 'No, I'm fasting. It's Ramadan. I don't want to break my fast.' My grandad said, 'Take the water, ease your pain.'" But the dying man wouldn't. So Vallabhdas said: "Let me fast for you." The soldier took the water. And every year for the rest of his life, Vallabhdas observed the fast at Ramadan.

Vallabhdas died when Nima was 12. Despite growing up in the same house, she had only the haziest knowledge of her grandfather's war service. "Remembrance Day would go past, VE Day would go past. It didn't occur to us. My grandad never talked about it."

She had thought he was a security guard. Instead, in that old cardboard box she found the Burma Star and the Africa Star. Between the documents and the recollections of family members, she realised her grandfather had travelled oceans and continents fighting the war. Then, like so many, he had come home and barely spoken of it.

The Royal British Legion is seeking to remedy this. It is taking the *Forgotten Army* exhibition on tour, to highlight the contribution made by, in particular, south Asian troops.

Antony Metcalfe, head of community engagement at the Royal British Legion, said: "Victory in the Second World War would not have been possible without the courage and sacrifice of Allied forces from across the Commonwealth and beyond, whose service helped shape modern Britain."

To coincide with VJ Day today, the Legion has spoken to the families of veterans to gather stories of their service. They include Mohammed Sharif, born in modern-day Pakistan, who was stabbed by a poisoned arrow while fighting the Japanese, and Major Gajjan Singh, who fought in Italy and Burma. The Singh family also knew little of his service. When researching his wartime record they were shocked to find a picture of him alongside Field Marshal Sir William Slim, commander of the Fourteenth Army in Burma.

Among the most dramatic stories was that of Subedar Dost Mohammad, who was part of the Indian army medical corps and was ambushed and captured by Japanese soldiers. Along with five comrades, he was lined up to be executed. One by one the Japanese shot them; at the fifth shot, Dost fell down — and fooled his captors into thinking he too was dead. Zohaib Afzal, his grandson, said: "My grandad was so brave, he was a one-man army. As a family, we are extremely proud of his war service and how decorated he was for fighting for Great Britain."

Nima said finding out about her grandfather's war experience brought her closer to Britain. "People who are maybe accused of not respecting our own military history as British people can feel that connection. I didn't have that personal connection, now I do. I can say it's my flag too. It's my history."

The Suchaks came to Britain, with thousands of Ugandan Asians, after the dictator Idi Amin came to power in 1972. The first years in Britain were hard for her grandfather, Nima said. "He was living as a refugee. Trying to make ends meet." He did not dwell on the past. There were, though, a few hints. On arrival, the family were registered at immigration. They were told about benefits; her grandfather declined them. Then, Nima's father said, the officer read through their papers. "He stood up from behind his desk and came up to shake my grandfather's hand to thank him for his service."

Ryanair cabin window blow-out 'caused by shard from engine'

Lara Bowman

A piece of aircraft engine snapping off mid-flight led to a Ryanair passenger being partially sucked through the window shattered by the debris, a report has found.

Ljubisa Karovic, 61, from Serbia, was left with half of his body hanging outside the aircraft after the incident over Greece last month.

According to a preliminary report, a metal blade at the front of the right engine snapped off at its base, sending debris into the fuselage and shattering the window beside him.

Karovic suffered neck and shoulder injuries and friction burns. He was held inside the aircraft by his wife and fellow passengers. The aircraft returned to Thessaloniki about an hour after take-off.

The report found that the aircraft, a Boeing 737-8AS, had not been fitted with engine-strengthening measures despite a rule change after a fatal accident on a separate aircraft eight years earlier.

Jennifer Riordan, 43, died in April 2018 after an engine failed on a Southwest Airlines flight and debris smashed the window beside her seat. US regulators ordered stronger fixings and reinforced panels on aircraft engines after Riordan's death, but the work "had not been incorporated" on the Ryanair aircraft, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) report said.

Ljubisa Karovic was nearly sucked out of the aircraft in last month's incident

Aircraft without the measures fitted cannot fly after July 31, 2028.

The blade that failed on the Ryanair flight had passed a crack scan on May 24, 253 flights earlier, with nothing found. Those scans were brought in by the engine maker, CFM International, after the accident that killed Riordan.

The NTSB report into the Ryanair incident found that more than a third of the blade had already cracked before it snapped. The engine was shaking many times harder than normal before the aircraft had even left the ground, and it got worse as it climbed. The crew reduced power and worked through the high vibration checklist, and the readings fell back.

The report also noted that a rubber spacer had deteriorated at one end, and that bird remains were removed from three parts of the engine and sent to the Smithsonian Institution for identification. Four suspected bird strikes were reported on that engine in the past 12 months, with no damage found.

Karovic's wife, Svetlana Grkovic, said she and other passengers grabbed his legs as he hung out of the window. "Luckily he was strapped in," she told the Serbian broadcaster Nova last month. Holding on to him, she thought: "If we die, we die together."

The NTSB has not established a precise cause and the investigation is ongoing. Ryanair said it would not comment until the investigation had concluded.

Boeing said: "Boeing continues to support the investigation led by the National Transportation Safety Board of the United States. We remain in contact and continue to work with our customers Ryanair and Malta Air."

My children won't want licences. In

As autonomous vehicles take over, thousands of jobs are likely to be replaced, Uber's president, Andrew Macdonald, tells **Laurence Sleator**

On the 15th floor of Uber's UK headquarters in east London, the rhythmic sound of a table tennis match can be heard. During rallies, idealistic visions are exchanged about how the world's transportation systems will change.

In a breakout room near by, direct from a red-eye flight from New York, is Andrew Macdonald, known as Mac, the president and chief operating officer. Macdonald — tall, slim and wearing smart-casual clothes straight from the Silicon Valley catalogue — has his own theories. "I've got a six-year-old, a three-year-old and a one-and-a-half-year-old. I don't think any of them are going to get driving licences," he says. "I don't think many people are going to need or want to drive themselves in ten to 15 years."

So will the motorhead or classic-car enthusiast be considered an eccentric hobbyist? "I think lots of people ride horses today because they enjoy them, but not because they are a necessary part of urban transport anymore," Macdonald says.

"Assuming governments don't outlaw driving, which is probably not off the table in some long-term horizon, in a world where you have fully autonomous transportation that's safe and ubiquitous, it becomes more of a hobby or choice as opposed to a necessity.

"In the world in which my future 16-year-old doesn't get her licence, [getting a driverless car is] probably cheaper by a significant amount than ride-sharing. I think that's when you will see people substitute owning an individual car."

His vision may be in its early stages, but the introduction of driverless cars and robo-taxis continues apace. Thousands operate in cities across the US including San Francisco, Los Angeles and Phoenix, and they will soon be available to paying passengers in London.

In the capital, Uber has partnered with the British start-up Wayve, whose self-driving artificial intelligence technology controls the electric Ford Mustang Mach-E cars as Uber provides the booking platform. Other companies, such as the Google-backed Waymo and Lyft, are also conducting tests and hope to be up and running soon.

The Uber-Wayve trips, to be available on the app within weeks for customers who have declared their interest, will initially have a safety driver ready to take the wheel if anything goes wrong. A full driverless experience, like those in the US, will follow once the vehicles' performance satisfies the British authorities.

Londoners seem to be sceptical, however. A recent YouGov survey commissioned by the London assembly's transport committee found that 42 per cent opposed autonomous vehicles, compared with 29 per cent who supported them.

Still, Macdonald, a 42-year-old Canadian who was promoted last year to second-in-command behind the chief executive, Dara Khosrowshahi, predicts that London and the UK will become a key market for driverless cars.

Now Uber's longest-tenured employee — he joined in 2012, two years after the company was started — Macdonald has helped to oversee its transformation from a rapidly growing start-up to a multibillion-dollar behemoth operating in more than 70 countries and 15,000 cities.

Driverless cars are the next focus, and Uber has said it will spend $10 billion expanding its network to eventually have at least 120,000.

"We'll start out small," Macdonald says. "Serve them the trips that they are able to handle and introduce autonomous vehicles to consumers gradually, because it's going to be a transition period, but I do think [London] will become one of our largest autonomous markets over the next few years. It's going to be really fun."

London is only the start, though, for a company with a "universal service mandate" to ensure the parts of the country covered by Uber taxis now can also go driverless. "You want to make sure you're not creating cities of haves and have-nots in terms of transport availability," he says. "Large parts of the UK are in less dense areas, not even suburbs. I'm talking small cities and towns and more rural areas. I think it's really important that those areas have the benefits of autonomy as well."

The benefits, proponents say, are safer roads — early data from the US has suggested a reduction in the number of serious crashes — and less isolation and more independence for elderly and vulnerable people, as well as economic growth through increased productivity.

Sceptics point to the increased congestion, as empty vehicles clock up thousands of miles between trips, as well as to hacking risks and how computers deals with so-called edge cases, in which a human would instinctively know how to behave.

In the London trials, Waymo vehicles have cruised into a taped-off police crime scene and annoyed residents in Shoreditch by persistently driving down a narrow cul-de-sac in the small hours and then blaring their reversing warning sounds as they leave.

The capital's ancient streets have also caused Wayve safety drivers issues as the cars occasionally decide to drive over potholes rather than around them, and are disengaged by the jolt.

In the US, matters have sometimes been more serious. An empty Waymo car was swept away after driving into a flooded road in Texas, and in San Francisco a beloved bodega cat named KitKat was run over and killed. The most notorious case was in Arizona in 2018, when Elaine Herzberg, 49, was killed by a self-driving Uber car as she wheeled a bicycle across the road. The safety driver, who had been watching a television show on her phone, was eventually found to be culpable.

Andrew Macdonald, a Canadian who

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ten years only hobbyists will drive

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has been with Uber since 2012, says a "huge" labour market transition is coming as cab and taxi drivers are replaced

One downside that Macdonald concedes is likely in the UK is the loss of jobs for taxi drivers. "In some markets the labour transition is going to be huge," he says. "There's 100,000 for-hire vehicle drivers in London. While in the short term I think their businesses are going to grow on platforms like Uber and others ... I think in the long term a lot of those jobs will be replaced by autonomous vehicles.

"I think governments and stakeholders have to decide, how quickly do you want that to happen? Are there guardrails that you want to have in place? How do you do it in a responsible way? How are you retraining those folks?"

Khosrowshahi has predicted that AI could replace 70 to 80 per cent of the work humans are capable of doing within a decade, and that physical jobs such as those done by his global workforce of ten million drivers will be gone in 15 to 20 years.

Uber has already cut a lot of customer service jobs and replaced them with AI. Drivers, many of whom say that the company's dynamic pricing algorithm takes too much of a cut at busy times, may be next.

Pessimism about how AI will affect the job market has fuelled calls for some form of tax on the technology. Bill Gates, Microsoft's co-founder, has suggested that companies pay a "robot tax" on any machines used to replace humans. In the US discussions continue about an AI sovereign wealth fund, under which some companies would be partly publicly owned.

This does not mean, Macdonald says, that human drivers will be obsolete. Some will still have places in a "hybrid network" helping to deal with peak demand periods, driving to outer parts of the city not covered by robo-taxis, or helping passengers to get home in bad weather.

"Humans are adding a lot of value to the experience that doesn't necessarily go fully appreciated by the average customer," he says. "Small things — parking on the right side of the street, that makes it easier for pick-up. If it's raining, parking under a covered area. Sending a message to the customer saying 'hey, there is a blockage there so I pulled up around the corner'. Giving customers a tip — 'hey, from here to get into that subway station go through that door'. Little human elements to the experience that I don't think we necessarily acknowledge in using these products every day.

"I do think in five years, even as autonomous vehicles are more ubiquitous in London, there will be some people who prefer black cabs, and I think that's good. Having a blended network of options for consumers to choose from is important."

Some London black cab drivers argue that their stringent training — learning about 25,000 streets via the Knowledge exams — puts them at an advantage. Steve McNamara, general secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association, has said that driverless cars are a solution to a problem we don't have — although, being a cabbie, he put his scepticism about a driverless takeover more colourfully: "Excuse me while I watch the flying pigs go past my window."

Macdonald points out that his company has proved doubters wrong in the past. "When Uber first launched in London, in 2012, the notion was, 'hey this won't work because we've got the Knowledge, and if you've got new people entering this trade that don't have that, the customer experience won't be as good'. I think our growth and the growth of other platforms has proven that, with technology like Google Maps ubiquitous, you can replace not all of that but much of that."

He is not only focused on roads in his utopian vision, however. Uber is also investing heavily in (piloted) electric helicopter taxis.

"I'm very interested in how many people are commuting to work in a human-sized drone," he says. "That will really change real estate values and all sorts, if you could live two hours outside of London but commute in 20 minutes."

This means, he says, that the skyline may one day look like that of a famous 1960s American cartoon. "If half the buildings we see right now had a landing pod at the top — it was quiet, it was safe — that's like the world of *The Jetsons*."

Andrew Gordon Macdonald

Born May 1984 in Toronto, Canada.
Education St Michael's College School, Toronto; Ivey Business School at Western University, London, Ontario
Career Consultant, Bain & Company, 2007-2010; Founder, Red JEM, 2010-2012; Uber: general manager and regional general manager roles, 2012-2019; senior vice-president, head of global mobility; president and chief operating officer, since June 2025
Family Lives in New York with his wife, Hillary, and three daughters

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My Week Nigel Farage*

Monday
Let me finish! Because although I'm obviously going to win in Clacton, I'm concerned about my dignity when we get the result.

"Listen," I tell the team. "I'm worried about the count. I might look ridiculous."

"Next to him?" says Richard Tice. "No way. He's the one with the bin on his head."

"Not the Count," I say. "The count."

"You OK?" says Zia Yusuf.

"It's the heat," says Suella Braverman.

"The election count?" I say. "Where they count the votes? The effing count!"

Lee Anderson says he heard somebody call Robert Jenrick an "effing count" the other day.

"No you didn't," snaps Robert.

"Yeah," says Lee. "In Wetherspoons."

"Guys," I say. "Let's not fight. Forget it. Forget the count. And the Count. He's a nobody. He's an Establishment joke. No one takes him seriously at all."

"I resent that," says Robert. "I'm supposed to be your shadow chancellor."

Tuesday
Coming back to my car, I find a traffic warden giving me a ticket.

"Sorry Mr Farage," he says. "Residents only."

"Oh!" I say. "That's how it is, is it? Well! We'll see what happens when the voters of Clacton give their verdict on that!"

The traffic warden says we're in Pimlico, though.

"Also," he says, "no offence, but what's it got to do with them? Because whatever happens in your by-election, you still don't have a permit."

"Typical Establishment flunkey!" I say. "What happened to democracy?"

Wednesday
We're launching our new prisons policy! We're going to send 11,000 foreign criminals to cages in El Salvador!

Some people reckon that's a bit extreme. But it's actually a real compromise compared with what Zia Yusuf wanted to do, which was throw them all down a well.

Speaking of Zia, I'm worried he's becoming a loose cannon. Which is why I've promised to tell him off, after he called the former Tory defence secretary Ben Wallace a "traitor" and a "moron".

"Listen chum," I tell him. "Rein it in a bit, eh?"

"No," says Zia. "Don't you see? It's us against them. They're the Establishment. Whereas we're just a completely ordinary collection of multi-millionaires."

This is obviously true. But we're also dropping in the polls and I'm worried we're occasionally starting to sound like maniacs.

"Then maybe you're a traitor and a moron, too," says Zia.

"Oh," I say.

"Anything else?" says Zia.

Thursday
Off to Clacton for polling day! I'm wearing a cream linen jacket. Partly because it's so hot. But also because I wanted something that would really show the milkshake.

We're definitely going to win. But I'm still worried about the count.

"Because frankly," I tell the lads, "I'm damned if I'll be demeaned and humiliated in my moment of victory by standing alongside a bunch of freaks and weirdos!"

"It won't be that bad," says Richard. "Suella and Nadine haven't even come."

Although I explain that I actually mean the other candidates. Such as Binface, and the Monster Raving Loonies.

So it would be great to find an excuse not to go.

"Security," says Zia, promptly. "Just say there's a credible threat."

"From Binface?" says Lee. "He can't even see out."

"From anyone," says Zia. "From people whipped up by the violent rhetoric of those Establishment bastards who ought to be put up against a wall!"

"Well, quite," I say. "And how is anyone meant to keep themselves safe against that?"

"With five million quid?" says Lee.

"Shut up, Lee," I say.

Friday
Triumph! Resounding, crushing triumph!

I mean, sure, no other parties actually stood, and I only got about twice as many votes as a comedian with a bin on his head. But it's still a hell of a victory over nobody in particular.

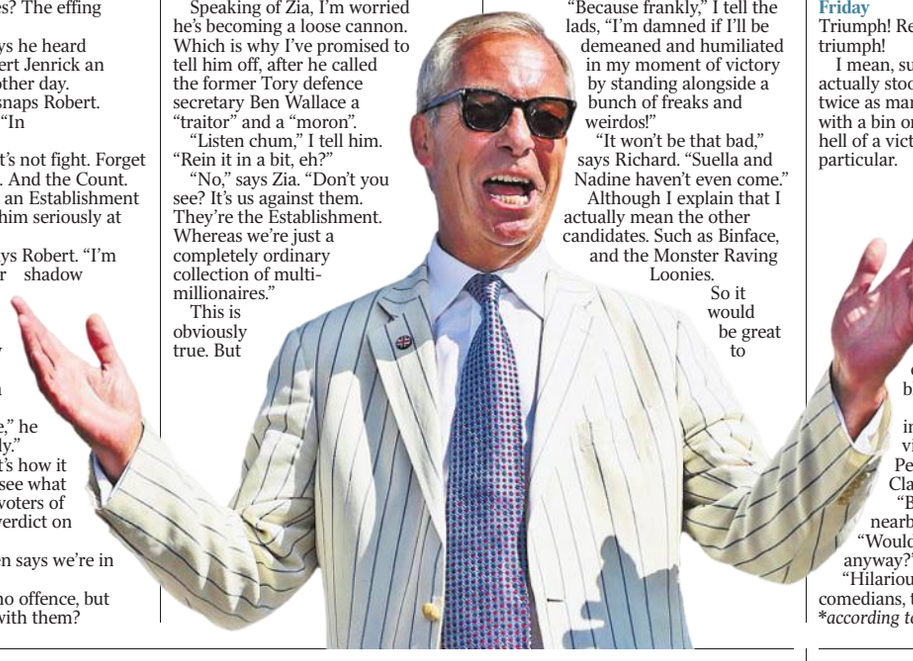
Almost immediately, though, we hear that the parliamentary authorities are resuming their investigation into my finances. Which may result in yet another by-election. And more bloody comedians.

"Well!" I say, climbing into my car outside our victory party. "So be it. Perhaps I'll be back in Clacton soon!"

"But you're our MP," says a nearby woman with a placard. "Wouldn't you be coming back anyway?"

"Hilarious!" I say. "See? We've got comedians, too!"

**according to Hugo Rifkind*



Million call to keep PC's killers in jail

More than one million people have signed a petition calling to block the early release of PC Andrew Harper's killers.

The police officer died in August 2019 when he was dragged by a car as three teenagers left the scene of a quadbike theft in Berkshire.

Jessie Cole and Albert Bowers were sentenced to 13 years for manslaughter in 2020 but could potentially be released next year under plans to tackle overcrowded prisons.

Andy Burnham, the prime minister, said this week he would do everything in his power to prevent their release.

The petition was started last week by Aileen O'Connor, chair of Thames Valley Police Federation, who said the decision to consider the killers for early release "pours salt into wounds that have never healed".

Speaking before the seventh anniversary of Harper's death today, she said the prospect of Cole and Bowers' release was an "insult to Andrew's family, his friends, his colleagues and the entire policing family".

The government plans to release 5,000 criminals early over a period of ten months from October under proposals to ease pressure on Britain's overcrowded jails by freeing up places.

Under changes to the Sentencing Act earlier this year, Cole and Bowers would become eligible for release in January after serving half their sentences, instead of the two thirds that prisoners in their category would ordinarily have to serve.

Since the petition was first shared last week, the prime minister has received two open letters — one from 50 police chiefs and one from 13 Thames Valley politicians — calling on him to exclude the men from the early release scheme.

'Kardashian of Cheshire' loses fraud sentence plea

Millie Turner

An influencer who called himself the "Kardashian of Cheshire" and was found guilty of posing as a millionaire to scam friends and family out of £200,000 has had his appeal against his prison sentence thrown out.

Jack Watkin, 26, was jailed for six years last year after pleading guilty to fraud charges and indecent image offences, including against a child.

His solicitor, Rebecca Caulfield, told London's Appeal Court at the Royal Courts of Justice that the sentence was "excessive" due to his autism diagnosis, while also citing his "immaturity" and the "fact that some money had been paid back". Caulfield further questioned the chronology of the indecent image offences and claimed that Watkin's age and autism were not "insufficiently taken into account in considering the sentence".

However, her argument was dismissed by appeal court judges who said that while his autism "might have affected [his] ability to fully understand the effect of his behaviour on others, it did not excuse it".

The influencer, who appeared on *Rich Kids of Instagram* reality TV show, used the lure of designer handbag brand Hermès to trick people into giving him money to fund his lifestyle. Watkin told victims he had contacts that could provide access to Hermès handbags and that they could split the profits made on resale, Chester crown court previously heard.

Jack Watkin lived a lavish lifestyle on money he scammed from friends

The bags, which are not sold over the counter and require an invite-only appointment, start at £8,000 but can cost as much as £30,000 if made from exotic materials such as alligator skin. The resale value can often be higher than the original price, and can be used as alternative investments.

Watkin defrauded six victims, including his friend Hannah Jakes, who lost £98,500, and Christine Colbert, the owner of Dress Cheshire, who was swindled out of £43,800. He even conned his own father, Jason Watkin, out of £24,500. None of the victims received the handbags or share in the profits of their resale.

Instead, the influencer splashed the cash in shops such as Harrods and the five-star London hotel The Dorchester, where his bill was about £130,000.

The investigation into Watkin was launched after a woman who inadvertently paid for his luxury hotel bill contacted the Metropolitan Police in 2022, having become suspicious of his excuses for not returning the money.

Cheshire Constabulary's Economic Crime Unit, which led the investigation, unearthed a string of victims and a large number of luxury goods and hotel bills. The fraud also led detectives to a "depraved" stockpile of indecent images, extreme pornography and prohibited images on his phone, some of which included children and animals.

"Watkin's deluded himself that he was a successful rich kid influencer," Detective Constable Gareth Yates of the crime unit, said. "Not only did Watkin's deceive his victims by befriending them and taking thousands from them, he was hiding a depraved secret habit, sickening his victims further after his hideous secret was uncovered when his mobile phones were downloaded by specialist officers."

Festival king dusts off plan to protect drought-hit park

Andy Silvester London Editor

Jim King has already had one festival affected by the weather this summer. He's determined to ensure he doesn't have another.

LIDO Festival, the newest urban spectacular under King's stewardship at the events giant AEG, was due to take place in June in Victoria Park, east London. After an extremely wet winter, which affected the resilience of the park's ground, AEG's advisers told King that it would benefit the park to have a little more time to recover before thousands of festivalgoers descended on it. A three-day festival became a one-day affair, pushed back to August.

He said: "Those decisions are extremely costly. But we are a long-term partner for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets [in which the park sits], the community — we take those responsibilities seriously."

Now, far from it being too wet, King has a different issue: All Points East, the late-summer highlight of London's festival calendar, will begin next weekend in a drought that has turned many of the capital's parks into dustbowls. Last year's All Points East suffered what a statement described as "well-reported dust issues" and King said that experience informed the group's plans this year.

"Immediately after the show, we worked with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to get back into the park [and begin] an extensive amount of reseeding," he said, adding that it made the park "as strong as it could be" as the festival dates approached. Of course, nobody predicted an "unprecedented" period of more than a month without a drop of rain.

King said: "We've now gone from planning into execution, with further resource and mitigation plans."

His teams have brought in extra ground protection, including plastic coverings, in high-footfall areas.

The festival, which has two shows from Tyler, the Creator and another from Lorde, has almost sold out. King described it as "250,000 people coming to Victoria Park to see six amazing headliners".

AEG says LIDO and All Points East delivered about £70 million in spending across London. However, there has been opposition. A petition started last year by a group calling itself Protect Victoria Park claimed the "commercialisation [of the park] has gone too far".

The group said: "Locals will not stand for this beloved green space being turned into a cash cow, then summers for years to come will be marred by massive fences, with locals being penned in to other areas that are increasingly busy." That was prompted by an application from AEG to use about a third of the park for 75 days of festival activities a year over the next six summers.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets and a local residents' group were contacted for comment.

Pimps, OnlyFans and my foot photos

Amelia Ellis became a content creator on the 'empowering' site and found it can be quite the opposite

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Amelia Ellis and one of her photos on OnlyFans. Below, the porn star Lily Phillips

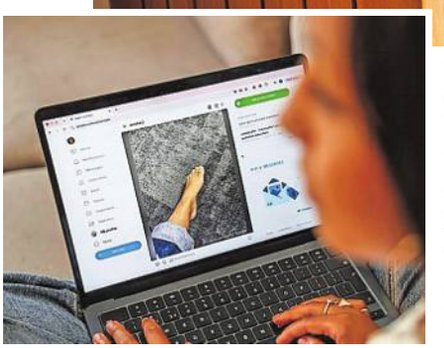
In the name of journalism I whipped out my foot in the offices of BBC Broadcasting House and clicked the iPhone shutter button.

I was investigating OnlyFans and, as part of that research, became a creator myself, posting foot photos. It began as a light experiment but quickly exposed a web of coercion and exploitation.

As cultural phenomena go, few have grown as sensationally as OnlyFans. Launched a decade ago by Guy and Tim Stokely, a father and son from Hertfordshire, it has transformed the sex work landscape, promoting itself as "committed to building the safest digital media platform in the world".

Creators could make thousands a month from subscribers requesting content ranging from lingerie photos to hardcore porn. Creators could do it from the comfort of their homes without meeting their subscribers. It sat squarely in the intersection of the girl boss/late-stage capitalism Venn diagram: an empowering vehicle to reclaim sex work on the individual's terms. Best of all, it cut out the middleman.

One creator said: "People couldn't do much about their fantasies before, without brothels. Now, people can do anything, anonymously."



In 2018 OnlyFans was bought by Leonid Radvinsky, a Ukrainian-American billionaire entrepreneur, and a couple of years later the pandemic made it fabulously lucrative. Creators racked up subscribers seeking personal connections in a locked-down world. But, owing to oversaturation, the average creator was reported in 2024 to have earned only $1,300 a year. Some creators said having help to promote content had become essential to success.

And so emerged the OnlyFans manager, a digital entrepreneur who promised to transform a creator's account for a percentage of their earnings.

I spoke to more than a hundred creators who had experienced management. Almost every one said they felt manipulated. Some were tied into contracts taking cuts of up to 70 per cent (that's after OnlyFans takes its 20 per cent).

Leanne, a mother of four, joined to post lingerie photos for extra income, signing a manager after she was assured that she wouldn't have to produce explicit content. But she was pressured daily to up the ante. She eventually gave in. "I felt sick. I said, 'Don't sell it for less than $200.'" She discovered they had sold it for $36. "I cried. It made me feel so disgusting."

OnlyFans states online: "We can remove any video at any time, including in direct messages." But when Leanne asked to remove the explicit content, she was told: "Once the unsend window has passed... we do not have the ability to remove purchased content... even if you delete your account." Leanne was later diagnosed with depression by her GP.

There have also been reports of managers threatening and violently assaulting their clients after they did not comply with demands.

As we delved deeper into this world, we uncovered manager forums, where catalogues of profiles are offered for sale to other managers, sometimes, it appeared, without the creator's knowledge. In another forum, with 24,000 members, managers discussed paying their creators tiny salaries instead of a percentage cut. One boasted he had cut his creator's salary to $2,000 a month, concealing the rest of her $98,000. They called it the "pimp method".

Sophie Kemp, partner at the London law firm Kingsley Napley, said: "This indicates there's coercion, deception and potential human trafficking taking place. What struck me is how systematic it is. This isn't isolated bad behaviour."

A creator called Riley showed us an email she sent to OnlyFans in 2024. She wrote: "People running agencies are selling women to control on OnlyFans." Riley posted a link to the same manager forum where they had openly analysed tactics. OnlyFans said it could not investigate activity "off-platform" and there was not enough evidence.

Andrew Wallis, who helped to write part of the Modern Slavery Act, said: "I expect in any risk assessment of receiving that information, there should be a 'holy cow' moment, and then, 'OK, we know what to do.' If you, as an organisation, are given evidence of potential criminal activity taking place, you should ask, what are our processes and procedures to follow around that? Human trafficking is a serious crime. It needs a serious response. So it does raise questions as to why the answer is, 'It's nothing to do with us.'"

We found seven instances where OnlyFans had been notified of manager practices, as far back as 2022. Matt Jury, a human rights lawyer, told us: "Based on the evidence I have seen, my view is that this is all to do with profit. They are protecting their bottom line."

OnlyFans told us that it did not endorse management agencies, it investigated reports of wrongdoing and worked with law enforcement. It added in a statement: "OnlyFans is continuously evolving and improving its safety measures to address emerging risks and deliver a safe platform for its community of users."

Claire Powell, of the law firm Leigh Day, said: "If an organisation suspects that money is the benefit of someone else's crime, there are legal duties to report concerns. If OnlyFans has suspicions, they should be making prompt reports to the relevant authorities."

OnlyFans says it "checks payment details and employs technological safeguards to ensure creators receive payments directly".

To test this, I became a creator myself. I set up my account, uploaded a photo and approached two colleagues to buy my toes for $20 each. After verifying my email, I inputted my boss's bank details. Days later, the payment arrived in his bank. Whatever checks OnlyFans had, they did not stop payment to a third party: the pimp method worked. Unbelievably, I'd also made it to the top 57 per cent of creators, which felt strangely thrilling (although the subscriptions quickly stopped).

I thought uploading the foot photo was the last step in the OnlyFans process but I realised that it was actually the first. I thought about the many creators I'd spoken to, beguiled by the site. Kenzie, another creator, told us: "To be a creator is an easy way to quickly build followers."

Kenzie, 19, is a straight man but his content is for a gay audience. He showed us his carousel of designer bags and an old school uniform that his subscribers asked him to wear while he performed. He said that eventually, he would pay someone to wipe his content from the internet. I wondered how.

Lily Phillips, 25, a porn actress who has posted videos on the site since she was 19, said: "Young girls don't have an understanding of what they're doing when they sign up to OnlyFans. I have loved it since I started, but to some girls, this job is glamourised with money and fame, and it's not the reality."

Tonia Antoniazzi, a Labour MP, and Eleanor Lyons, the anti-modern slavery commissioner, have called for a parliamentary inquiry into OnlyFans following the investigation.

Antoniazzi said: "Legislation is not agile enough to keep up with online spaces; OnlyFans is exploiting that. This is like the biggest pimping website that exists. They have a duty of care. If managers are part of that ecosystem, responsibility lies with OnlyFans."

The Sexual Offences Act was written in 2003, long before modern digital platforms were imagined, and has not been updated to encompass online sex work. Technology has moved faster than legislation and a whole community is left exposed.

OnlyFans acknowledges that creators may use managers. Like most Big Tech firms, it positions itself as a platform that simply hosts users. But when the middlemen arrived, a $3 billion company continued to take 20 per cent of every transaction.

Amelia Ellis is a producer of OnlyFans: Inside the Machine, available on BBC iPlayer

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World

Return to Afghanistan five

Anthony Loyd finds that women are almost invisible and the country remains mired in crisis

It took just two weeks. When the Taliban entered Kabul on August 15, 2021, the US-backed government collapsed without a fight. A fortnight later, the last American soldier left Afghanistan.

A tumble of memories from those days remain salient in my mind: the smell of jet fuel, as well as sweat and fear from among the heaving throngs of panic-stricken civilians swarming the airport perimeter fence; the roar of transporter engines and the spangling burst of decoy flares ejected from departing planes; the scenes at the airport as jubilant Taliban wandered through the hangars past piles of discarded uniforms and weapons; abandoned embassies; and the emptied cages of Bagram prison.

Five years later I went back.

July 20, 2026

SANGIN, HELMAND

Aside from the Bailey bridge over the Helmand River, scant evidence of foreign presence remains. The coalition bases are dust. The bazaar is full. There is no sign of women. Boys jump off the iron bridge, plunging into the river to escape the heat.

I saw just one female in the entire town, a girl of about 11 who waded alone in a canal. On the threshold of puberty, under the Taliban's interpretation of sharia, soon she too was destined to be sequestered.

More than 100 British soldiers were killed and hundreds were wounded here over a four-year period, more than the British suffered anywhere else in Afghanistan during the 20-year western occupation. The Taliban talk nostalgically of the simplicities of war, the thrill of action and certainties of a cause. Peace is overshadowed by hunger and poverty.

"Our problems now are different, and peace has brought its own challenges," Haji Matin Haji Lala, the governor of Sangin, said. "But I never forget the war." The British once said Haji Matin was "irreconcilable". A prominent insurgent commander, he was shot and captured in a special forces night raid and spent five years in the US-run prison at Bagram. A picture from his prison file shows a gaunt and desperate man. Despite it all, he said that he missed the war.

"It is true that war causes destruction and stress, but even now if our leader ordered us to fight in Pakistan and fight the Pakistanis, I would pick up my weapons and happily go there," he said. The Taliban brought a degree of stability to ordinary Afghans, at a price. Whatever the repression of the ultra-fundamentalists and the severity of the gender apartheid they have imposed, in the final years before the Taliban seized power, the war was a bloodsoaked shambles in which the wishes of most Afghans were pushed to the shadows. Above all else, they were desperate for security.

Yet that victory has brought a different array of stresses. The economy is in rags. A massive reduction in international aid has poleaxed the food and health sectors. Trade has been hit by the closure of its border with Pakistan and the disruption of routes from Iran. Climate change, natural disasters and a huge influx of forcibly returned refugees have added to the crisis.

More than 17 million Afghans are facing acute food insecurity. In Sangin, malnourishment among children under five is at 69 per cent. Tuberculosis rates are soaring.

So it is no surprise that the Taliban reflect on war with euphoric recall, and view the glories of governance with jaded eyes. "I don't love war," said Haji Matin as he ate lunch on the floor of his office. It was 45C outside and dust devils pirouetted along the banks of the river. "But I would happily fight again."

July 23

KAKARAK VILLAGE, URUZGAN

In the footsteps of a Victoria Cross lies an implacable rage. Esmatullah was ten when a group of Australian SAS soldiers came to his home in the village of Kakarak. The foreigners, their faces streaked in camouflage paint, rounded up the women and children. They found Esmatullah's father and older brother, Ahmadullah, hiding in a tunnel and detained them. Ahmadullah, in his early twenties, had a prosthetic leg, having lost his limb in a bike accident.

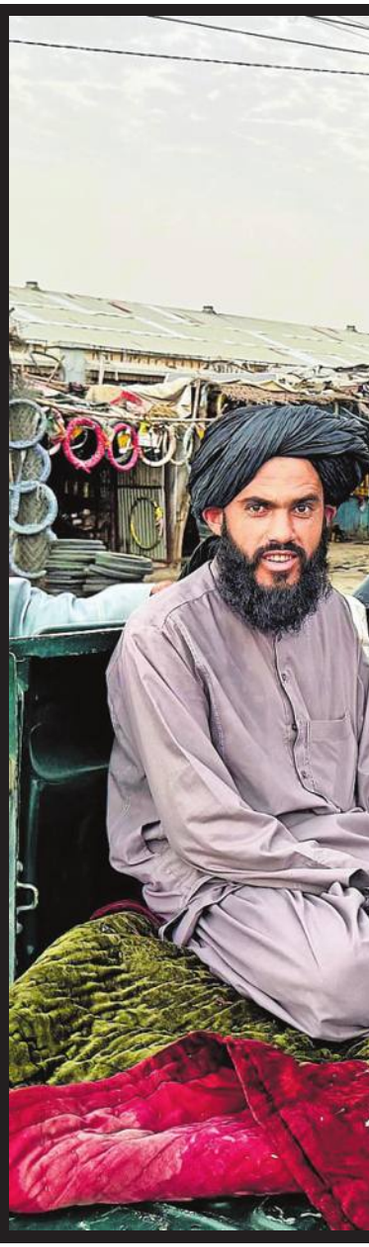
The next time Esmatullah saw his father and brother, their bodies lay in the rubble of the family home. Both had been shot at close range. Part of his father's head had been blown off. His brother's false limb was missing.

Years later, photographs emerged of an SAS soldier drinking beer from the stump of what is said to be Ahmadullah's false leg. Another SAS soldier, Ben Roberts-Smith, who won the Victoria Cross in 2010 after he charged two Taliban machinegun posts, appears to be cheering the man on, a clenched fist raised.

SAS witnesses in a defamation said that Roberts-Smith threw Ahmadullah to the ground and shot him in the back, before another soldier took his leg as a trophy. Allegations of the war hero's involvement in several other killings of detainees were also described by his fellow soldiers. In one instance, SAS witnesses said Roberts-Smith had kicked a farmer off a cliff then ordered another soldier to kill him as he lay in the dust, hands bound and teeth smashed.

Roberts-Smith is now facing trial in Australia on five charges of war crime murder. The killings of Esmatullah's father and brother are among the charges.

Esmatullah, now 27, pulled out his phone. Roberts-Smith's face was on the screen. "I would like to see him executed, to see him hanged," he said. "An eye for an eye. I want that."



Peace has brought its own challenges to Helmand province, and boredom is a big problem for former soldiers who would willingly fight again. There were few women in sight and the girl, above, will soon fall victim to Afghanistan's gender apartheid. There were lighter moments, including boys swimming to escape the heat. Bottom left, in 2021 children attended a victory parade

July 24

THE HIGHWAY, GHAZNI

In 1875, the 5th Royal Irish Lancers gave a demonstration of tent pegging at the Gun Club in Hurlingham. The sport involves a lancer galloping full tilt and skewering a peg target in the ground with the lance.

"It is but one of the many warlike feats in which the Mohammedan tribes from over the Indus and the wild fearless riders of Afghanistan excelled centuries ago," the Illustrated London News reported at the time.

Lances were introduced to British cavalry regiments in 1816, a year after they had suffered devastating casualties to French and Polish lancers at the Battle of Waterloo. British cavalry adopted the sport of tent pegging from the Afghans, whose horsemen had invented it hundreds of years earlier.

Driving down the highway outside Ghazni, I saw a group of lancers competing and stopped to watch. One horse, a grey Waziri stallion named Mashang, caught my eye. Its owner, Abdulwahab, asked me if I wanted a ride, so I swung myself up, grabbed a lance and pranced around for a moment or two. I can ride well enough to know that the slightest glitch in a lancer's precision results in failure. So, having watched the Afghans hooting derisively at any lancer who failed to skewer their target, I wasn't stupid enough to try riding down a peg. Quitting while ahead is equally essential in war and peace.

July 26

MANDEKHAIL, PAKTIA PROVINCE

Gul Afsar has diabetes and a heart condition. Nevertheless, when a

15 years in jail for sharing her people's pain
Page 42

Samuel Beckett: 'Soon the Nazis will make me puke'
Page 44

years after Taliban takeover

ANTHONY LOYD FOR THE TIMES

Pakistani airstrike blew up a neighbour's house one night, he rushed to pull survivors from the wreckage. Minutes later a second airstrike ripped into the rescuers. The blast set fire to Gul Afsar's clothes, burning his face and body, and shrapnel ripped open the side of his mouth. Seventeen Afghans were killed and more than 100 wounded during the Pakistani strike on Mandekhail in June. One of the dead was a 12-year-old boy. A three-year-old girl had her arm blown off. The bombing was part of an unfolding conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan, former allies, that has caused the deaths of 499 Afghan civilians and injured 1,216 over the past nine months. Most of the dead have been killed by airstrikes, which Pakistan claims are aimed at bases inside Afghanistan belonging to the Tehrik-e-Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban.

As he spoke to me in the rubble of the house in Mandekhail where so many were killed, Gul Afsar suddenly flared in fury. He was angry with Pakistan, but he was angry with hunger too. "We do not want a return to war," he spat, "but what is peace with nothing to eat?"

July 27

BAZARAK, THE PANJSHIR VALLEY

I met Ahmad Shah Massoud, dubbed the Lion of Panjshir, several times in the 1990s. He was a mujahideen commander during the Soviet occupation who went on to command the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. He was killed by an al-Qaeda suicide bomber on September 9, 2001, two days before the attacks on the Twin Towers, and his tomb lies in a mausoleum in Bazarak, in the Panjshir valley where he was born.

Visiting it today in a haze of heat, a group of 12 Taliban, once Massoud's sworn enemies, called me to join them drinking tea in the mausoleum grounds. Guarding Massoud's tomb against desecration, the fighters spoke with affection of their old enemy.

"He was a good Muslim, and a patriot too," said the commander. "We don't have enemies among the dead."

Though the Panjshir valley was once a bastion of anti-Taliban resistance, the Taliban fighters said they were bored with their job there and moaned that it was years since they last had a clash with local resistance.

Armed opposition groups in Afghanistan, including the National Resistance Front founded by Massoud's son, Ahmad Massoud, remain fragmented and are nowhere near strong enough to challenge the Taliban for territorial control. However, recent clashes in a northern province, Badakhshan, between the Taliban and another insurgent group, the Afghanistan Freedom Front, have resulted in the deaths of dozens over the summer.

Though disparate, the upsurge in these attacks, combined with the presence of so many disaffected former soldiers and the worsening economic situation, has alarmed the Taliban. The mix bodes ill for lasting peace.

Yet there was no sign of war this hot afternoon in the middle of the Panjshir. The Taliban yawned and stretched and talked about their past glory days making bombs to blow up US and British troops.

"Training was the worst part," said Mohibullah, as he talked me through the cocktail ratios of homemade explosives, not forgetting to detail just a dash of sodium nitrate. "Loads of my friends were blown up in bomb classes."

"But spend the day with us," he added, "and we'll make a bomber out of you."

July 28

BIRD STREET, KABUL

Tucked away behind the Pul-e Kheshti Mosque, Bird Street lends itself to easy reflections on liberty and confinement. It is not short of legends either. A merchant once told me that he had sold a hawk to an Arab al-Qaeda emir. Months later the bird flew back to the merchant with a gold ring around one of its legs. That's what he said anyway.

The first time I walked down this long, winding alley, flanked on either side by the calls and cries of hundreds of caged birds — finches, pigeons, canaries, chickens, ducks, geese, mynahs and parrots — it was early 1996 and Kabul was still ravaged by civil war.

Freedom was anarchy. Freedom was rape, robbery and murder.

Entire neighbourhoods lay in ruins. Warlords controlled different sectors and the rights of women, whose abduction, violation and killing had been one of the hallmarks of that conflict, lay trampled in the ruins.

Then came "the cage". Abhored in the West, not least because of their ultra-fundamentalist views and alliance with al-Qaeda, the Taliban emerged as a response to that chaos. The rule of the Taliban's first emirate from 1996 to 2001, though severely repressive, ended the worst ravages of warlords in the areas they controlled.

Somewhere between cage and rampage, horror and repression, war and hunger, Afghans deserve a benign peace. They have yet to find it.

I saw no gold-ringed falcons that day in Bird Street. But, in one cage there, I noticed a huddle of four pigeons sequestered by a flimsy partition from two white cats, who gnawed at a bird's bloody carcass.

July 29

MARANJAN HILL, KABUL

Once suppressed as part of a broader ban on joyful expression that still includes restrictions on dance and music, kite fighting was forbidden by the Taliban during their first period in power. They labelled it un-Islamic and said it distracted young men from prayer. The ban gained international attention after it became the focus of Khaled Hosseini's bestselling novel, *The Kite Runner*.

Today, up on Maranjan Hill, beside King Nadir Shah's tomb, dozens of kites scythed the air, the flyers competing to cut each other's strings. From time to time a group of armed Taliban walked among them, their apparent tolerance just one of many incremental differences between the repressiveness of their first and second era in power.

Some restrictions have softened. The enforcement of the Taliban's 2024 Law on the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, a centrepiece of coercive legislation, is patchy and decentralised. In other respects, such as the ban on women's education and restrictions on women's movement and employment, the Taliban's second incarnation is every bit as draconian as their first.

The Taliban have described their varied implementation of different restrictions as deliberately calibrated. Yet they have made no secret of their eventual intent to apply the full letter of sharia law across Afghanistan.

Meantime, on an evening patrol with the Taliban's morality police, I gained insight into life in Kabul five years after the Taliban's return to power. Some women dared to expose their faces. People still played music. Prayer times were not universally observed. Gender segregation remained haphazard.

Most transgressors were reprimanded by the patrol with no more than a mild talking to. For others, the stakes were higher, affording a glimpse into the Taliban's totalitarian vision.

An unmarried couple found travelling in a car were detained and brought to the patrol's headquarters. Under questioning, the 20-year-old woman admitted that she was not the wife of the driver, a 31-year-old man. He was married to someone else. The situation deteriorated with the discovery of video clips on the man's phone, showing the woman "improperly covered".

"There is neither evidence, nor confession of adultery," said Esmanullah, the morality police patrol commander. "Nevertheless, it is a clear case of moral corruption, requiring discretionary punishment."

He referred the case up to a Taliban court and told me that the couple could each receive up to three months in jail, or else be married in the courtroom. "If we go easy on them everyone will be doing it," he said.

With that, he gathered up his morality police patrol and stepped back on Kabul's streets to wrestle with the sacred dictates of virtue and vice.

Plight of Afghans worsening under Taliban's rule, leading article, page 29

World

15 years for sharing her people's pain

Yalda Moaiery, an Iranian photojournalist, tells **Fatemeh Jamalpour** and **Roxana Saberi** why she'll defy her sentence

YALDA MOAIERY

Shaghayegh Khademi, photographed by Yalda Moaiery, bottom left, was initially jailed for 16 years for protesting. Below left, the image of Melika Nakhaie raising her fist caught the attention of President Trump in December 2017. Below right, Moaiery also photographed women being put into vans for not wearing the hijab

Friends and family warned Yalda Moaiery she was looking for trouble from the moment she picked up a camera.

It did not deter her. "This is the path I chose," she told The Times of her career as a photojournalist in Iran. "I feel that it was my purpose in this world, despite all its dangers."

Now, one of those dangers has become reality for her. On Sunday, she was sentenced to 15 years in prison by Tehran's Revolutionary Court for "media activity aimed at strengthening and promoting the Zionist regime".

"It is an unjust sentence," Moaiery said from Tehran. "But refusing to move in the direction of the Islamic Republic's propaganda ... carries a price. I have accepted that price."

She was tried in absentia last month because she had not received notice of the summons. The authorities had cut off her mobile service, a measure used against Iranian journalists and activists. Moaiery has appealed against the verdict and is still at liberty in Tehran.

The ruling, reviewed by The Times, cited interviews with media organisations regarded as hostile by Iran's authorities, exhibitions showing her photos in the United States and those she supplied to foreign news outlets.

The court permanently barred her from receiving government services such as medical insurance as well as from conducting media work, "economic activities" and driving. Her cameras, mobile phone and electronic equipment will remain confiscated.

"I wasn't upset about the 15 years," Moaiery, 45, said. "It was the accusation that made me angry. They had turned the very thing I have fought against throughout my life into a charge against me: 'strengthening the bloodthirsty Zionist regime'. I found that deeply unfair."

Jason Rezaian, director of press freedom initiatives at The Washington Post, said the severity of Moaiery's sentence reflected the power the Iranian authorities attributed to her work.

"Anyone who observes Iran closely and honestly knows that Yalda Moaiery is one of the very few independent chroniclers of that country's contemporary history," he said. "She has done this work for over two decades at great personal risk and cost, and this latest sentence is an indication of how much of a threat Iranian authorities consider the realities she documents."

Moaiery, who was born in Tehran, began taking photos professionally at 18. She travelled to Afghanistan and covered the Iraq war, which broke out in 2003. "For me, much of it began as curiosity," she said. "I wanted to know what was happening, so I went to see."

Among Moaiery's most significant photographs are images from the first days of Iran's morality police patrols in 2007. She photographed women being forced into the white police vans that would become synonymous with the enforcement of wearing the hijab. "If you look at my photographs from that period, the officers were smiling," she said. "But gradually everything became harsher. They continued their appalling behaviour, and people's anger grew. Society is now profoundly angry."

In December 2017, during the nationwide protests that began over economic grievances, Moaiery photographed a young woman walking through smoke in front of Tehran University with one fist raised. President Trump, who was in office for his first term, shared the image on social media. "That photograph divided my life into 'before and after'," Moaiery said. "After that, the Islamic Republic never left me alone. It was as though [the regime] had suffered a wound and constantly wanted revenge." For years, interrogators accused her of personally supplying the image to Trump, an allegation she called "utterly absurd". Her family, she said, had been affected by Trump's travel restrictions on Iranians during his first term.

In 2022, Moaiery was arrested while photographing Iran's Woman, Life, Freedom protests, triggered by the death of Mahsa Jina Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurdish woman, while in the custody of Iran's morality police. "I was infinitely angry about what had happened, and I think the rest of the country felt the same way," she said.

Moaiery was sentenced to eight years in prison but was later pardoned. Before her pardon, however, she was imprisoned for three months in Qarchak, a women's prison outside Tehran "notorious for its inhumane conditions", according to Human Rights Watch. After her release, she began photographing women she had met in prison at the locations where they had been arrested, with their hair uncovered. The series was called *My Fighting Sisters*.

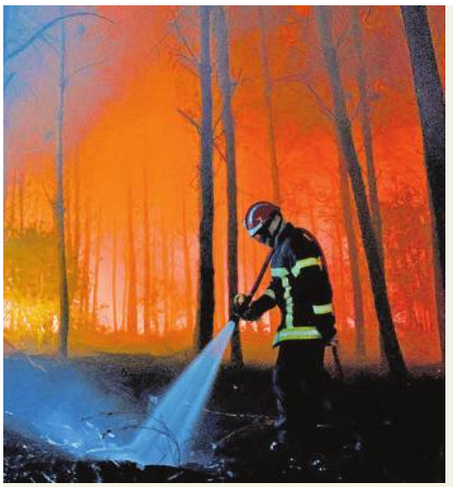
"I wanted to show who we mean when we speak of a woman who fights," she said. "I wanted to create a visual document. The Islamic Republic wants to erase everything. There will be no evidence that these people existed. I made this work to say, 'These people were here. They existed.'"

In 2023, Moaiery travelled to the US to join her family. But when the 12-day war between Israel and Iran broke out in June last year, she felt a pull to return. "I have photographed so many wars," she said. "Now it was happening in my own country, and I was in America."

Wouldn't she rather have remained free in the US than face prison in Iran? "Absolutely not," she said. "I would rather be in prison in Iran than free in America. Perhaps that seems foolish, but I do not regret it for even a moment."

Before returning to Iran, she had embraced her father, who is based in the US, but did not tell him that she believed it might be their final meeting. Now she longs for one thing. "I want to see my father," she said. "At least once, before I go to prison for 15 years, I want us to say a proper goodbye."

BACKGRID



President Macron was criticised for showing off on his action-packed holiday on the Riviera while firefighters continue to battle forest blazes, left

Macron frolics as his country burns

President Macron has been accused of "megalomania" after being photographed jet-skiing on holiday during a summer marked by heatwaves and forest fires in France (Adam Sage writes).

Leftwingers rounded on Macron, 48, after the front cover of Paris Match magazine showed him on the petrol-powered vehicle thought to cost about £22,000.

The magazine ran further photographs on inside pages showing the president on a hover foil — an above-water surfboard — as well as on a beach and driving a boat with a group of his security guards. Another photograph featured his wife, Brigitte, 73.

The magazine said Macron had brought a "holiday camp" mood to Fort de Brégançon, the presidential retreat on the Riviera, for his last summer as leader.

Commentators said Paris Match, which is owned by Bernard Arnault, the luxury goods tycoon, appeared to have been authorised to take the photographs during the president's holiday of almost three weeks.

Critics said the timing of this incident was particularly inappropriate. "During the heatwave, when France is burning, when some French people have been unable to go on holiday, the president is having fun jet-skiing at Brégançon," Olivier Faure, the first secretary of the opposition Socialist Party said. "Is that the message?"

Alexis Corbière, an MP with L'Après, another left-wing party, was scathing of "the muscles shown off, the sunglasses, the very polluting watercraft". He added: "This stage-managed [photograph] speaks volumes about the absolute megalomania of his character and his total incomprehension of the ecological, social and democratic crisis."

A presidential aide said Macron had waited until last month's big fire near Bordeaux had been brought under control before going on holiday.

Paris Match also published an article that said Macron was dividing his time between work, leisure and sport on his holiday.

Friends, Romans, curlers: lend me your plastic rink

Italy

Tom Kington Rome

The three teenagers trying their luck at curling were sweating in the August heat. They hardly resembled the serious Nordic types associated with the ice sport, and the location was even more unlikely: up on the Oppian Hill in Rome, which commands fine views over the Colosseum.

"We saw curling on TV during the Winter Olympics and really wanted to have a go, but it's not as easy as it looks," Arsenne Dolor, 19, said after slowly hefting a stone and launching it along the slippery rink.

The students are among more than 11,000 locals and tourists who have flocked to the three rinks since they were set up in June. Curling has grown fast in Italy since the country's mixed doubles team won gold in Beijing in 2022 and bronze at the Winter Games in Milano Cortina this year, watched by three million Italians on television.

"We've had curious Romans show up to try curling as well as tourists who come to take a photo of the Colosseum and stick around to try the sport," said Manfredi Russo, a PE teacher giving free instruction at the rinks.

Sizzling heat meant ice needed to be substituted with slippery white plastic, lubricated with a spray, while the rinks are shorter than Olympic length and the stones are a lighter, plastic version.

Arsenne Dolor, left, Emanuele Ragni and Gabriele Colangelo try the sport

The unusual plan to launch curling at the Colosseum at the height of a scorching Roman summer was hatched by Sport e Salute ("Sport and Health"), a state-owned company that has built basketball, volleyball and five-a-side football courts — as well as a skatepark — at Colle Oppio, taking the hill back from the tramps and drug dealers who once called it home.

Even bolder plans are under way to set up a large water tank for rowing in the park, where remains of a 1st century AD thermal bath built by the emperor Titus poke through the grass.

The curling set-up was an attempt to show "the impossible is possible", officials said. Marco Mezzaroma, the company's chairman, said: "We've seen a sport that was born on ice conquer the hearts of children and families in the centre of Rome, in one of the most iconic locations in the world."

The Italian Olympic champion Amos Mosaner was impressed. "It's great because it's making the sport better known," said Mosaner, who grew up in the village of Cembra in Trentino in northern Italy, where he curled on the local ice rink from the age of five.

Mosaner said the sport's appeal was clear on social media. "I have seen videos of people playing on kitchen floors using pots instead of stones," he said.

Invented on frozen bogs in Scotland in the 16th century, curling was then introduced by Scot immigrants to Canada, which became a powerhouse in the sport. It did not arrive in Italy until the 1950s, with only a handful of ice rinks dotted around northern Italy today.

After Italy's Olympic success, the country's Ice Sports Federation has got behind curling, upping annual funding to €900,000 from €120,000 and investing in psychologists and dieticians to improve performance.

"We believe in the sport and we have had extraordinary results", Andrea Gios, the federation president, said. Since February's bronze, the number of card-carrying curling players has grown by 100 to 450, he added.

Forget Kylie. Albanese joked about invading New Zealand

Australia

Colette Fountain

When Bush Barbie entered the comedy scene eight years ago, it was for a condom ad. Last month its host, Nikki Osborne, interviewed the Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese.

The interview on her podcast, *Bush Deep*, went viral because of his comments, including jokes involving Kylie Minogue and the Japanese prime minister's melons.

He was accused of sexism, and opposition politicians have demanded a public apology for the comments.

Osborne, 45, did not expect the level of backlash. "I thought I said a few naughty things, but I didn't think he'd said anything wrong other than when he said he could take over New Zealand tomorrow if he felt like it," she said. "But no, people care more about Kylie Minogue than New Zealand."

Nikki Osborne thought that Albanese did nothing wrong

In the bloopers section at the end of the podcast, Albanese had told her: "We could take over New Zealand, it's still in our constitution, we could just do it."

The joke did not gain any traction. Attention instead focused on a section where Osborne asked Albanese whether he would choose Minogue, the actress Nicole Kidman or the entertainer Rhonda Burchmore in a game of "Shag, marry, date". The prime minister said: "Kylie, clearly."

It led to accusations of sexism, and an apology from Albanese, 63.

More trouble followed about Albanese's anecdote about Sanae Takaichi, the Japanese prime minister. Asked what was "the most crap gift you've ever received on an overseas jaunt", Albanese said that Takaichi gave him two crown melons that "ended up being quite good" while gesturing with his hands in front of his chest.

He rejected suggestions that his comments had been inappropriate.

Osborne thought she had been made "a political pawn" in clashes over Albanese's budget in May that has since sent the value of property and household spending plummeting. Angus Taylor, the opposition leader, said it was a "bin fire of a budget".

There were less viral moments, such as when Osborne asked him about his recent wedding: "Still bonking like rabbits?" He replied: "When we have time."

Osborne is now coming to Britain, and said: "If you want to get rid of a politician, I'll put them on my show."

GIUSEPPE DI STEFANO/REUTERS

High drama Hundreds of flights in and out of Sicily have been grounded by an unusual amount of ash from Mount Etna's latest eruption, which began over a week ago

Techno DJ trades decks for drones

Elizabeth Rushton Berlin

With his shaved head, pierced ear and sunglasses indoors, Dmytro looks like the archetype of a Berlin techno DJ.

The 32-year-old from Kharkiv has become a familiar figure behind the decks at events for the Ukrainian community in Berlin.

Now he has chosen to leave behind his life as an architect and DJ to return to Kharkiv and fight.

Ukrainians who were already living abroad when the war started are not routinely summoned for military service, but Dmytro needed no persuasion. "If we don't take up arms, we'll be wiped out and there'll be no more Ukraine," he said.

He is now a member of the Yasni Ochi (Clear Eyes) drone unit, part of the Kharkiv-based Khartiia brigade known for having Ukrainian artists within its ranks, including the author and musician Serhiy Zhadan.

"The war has changed in such a way that even unathletic gamers and civilians like me can make a difference using drones," he said.

Initially, Dmytro believed that he could contribute financially while working as an architect in Germany.

But in February, he was sacked from an architecture firm in Switzerland after refusing to work on a villa for a Russian oligarch. That day, he wrote to friends who were serving in Yasni Ochi and said he wanted to join them.

"I want to restore civilian life here," he said. "I want to make a safe place for my kids to grow up in."

'Soon the Nazis will make me puke'

Samuel Beckett's secret travelogue shows what he thought of Hitler's Germany (and himself), **Oliver Moody** writes

On November 3, 1936, a slight, bibulous Irishman sidled into Lübeck Cathedral, crept into the far corner of the aisle next to its choir and relieved himself. It was "short, vigorous and silent", he wrote.

This was Samuel Beckett, a failing 30-year-old writer tormented by self-loathing and haemorrhoids, and he had run away to Nazi Germany for reasons that were obscure even to him.

Beckett spent a little over six months touring the Third Reich in the barren spell before the publication of his first novel, *Murphy*, and at a point when his postwar success, including a Nobel prize in literature and *Waiting for Godot*, would have seemed unattainable.

He had a miserable time. Wrestling with writer's block, he was appalled by the regime's propaganda, bored or irritated by most of the people he met and revolted by German food, adopting the acronym WCOE: what can one eat?

Yet the diary that he kept along the way, which remained secret until his death in 1989, is a remarkable account of life and culture under Nazism by one of the most perceptive outsiders to travel through the country at the time.

Consisting of 120,000 words of almost illegible handwriting, for many years it has been the last significant chunk of Beckett's work to remain unpublished in full, although several excerpts have previously been issued.

Next week his *German Diaries* will be released in a collected edition, running to 1,352 pages, with the original English text and a German translation.

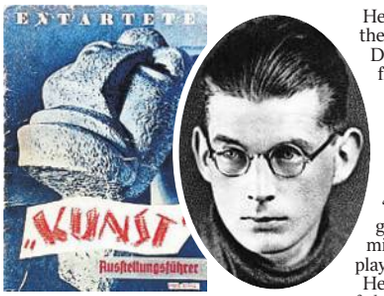
Professor Mark Nixon, co-editor of the volume and director of the Beckett International Foundation at Reading University, said it was an extraordinary piece of writing both as a first-hand account of Nazi Germany and as a rare personal record of a literary figure who otherwise kept almost no journals.

"It's a pivotal document in terms of tracing Beckett's growth as a writer, both in terms of his engagement with the visual arts and his use of language," Nixon said.

In his early twenties he had fallen in love with his cousin, Peggy Sinclair, who lived in the German city of Kassel. He visited her there at least eight times before she died of tuberculosis in 1933.

During his visits, he learnt the country's language, wolfed down its classic literature and developed a fascination with its contemporary art. By late 1936, Beckett had made a limited name for himself as a critic and published some poems and short stories, but was going through a crisis of purpose and wished above all to get away from his overbearing and widowed mother in Dublin.

He had a sentimental attachment to Germany but fundamentally the trip was, as he put it in a letter to a friend, "a journey from, and not to". Nixon said it was clear that Beckett had been in a state of anguish and suffering from "some kind of generalised anxiety". "You can see in the diaries that he feels he is failing somehow," he said. "He feels he is failing as a writer and as a human being."



Beckett was in Nazi Germany shortly before the "degenerate art" exhibition

Beckett arrived in the port of Cuxhaven at the end of September 1936, between the Olympic Games in Berlin and the opening of the notorious "degenerate art" exhibition of banned paintings in Munich.

Many of the German writers and artists he admired had already been suppressed by the regime but the censorship was still uneven. Those with a bit of luck or good connections could still buy Thomas Mann's novels or view the subversive paintings of Otto Dix and Max Beckmann.

Beckett, who was toying with abandoning his literary ambitions and becoming an art historian, saw a number of private collections of forbidden artworks. He also met prominent cultural figures held in suspicion by the Nazis, such as the Swiss painter Karl Ballmer and the novelist Hermann Stehr.

He tramped systematically through the art museums of Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden and Munich, and attended film screenings, plays and concerts.

He dismissed much of what he saw and heard as "bilge". Witnessing an orchestra in Berlin under the direction of Wilhelm Furtwängler, he derided the composer as a "dying duck" executing a "terrible impotent protracted programmatically modern compromise, really terrible and terribly played".

He catalogued not just the contents of the galleries and the names of the streets he traversed, but also his reading, the price of everyday items, his bowel movements, the copious quantities of drink he consumed, and above all his ailments of body and soul.

These ranged from pustulous fingers, diarrhoea, an excruciating egg-sized lump in his nether region to something very much like depression.

Unlike other foreign visitors to Nazi Germany in this period, Beckett was not remotely swept away by any of the regime's taste for spectacle. Arriving in Hamburg, he soon came across a loudspeaker "blaring" speeches by Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda minister. "Apoplexy," he wrote. "They must fight soon (or burst)."

At his guesthouse in the city, he was obliged to sit through evenings of "interminable harangues" by Hitler and Hermann Goering over the radio, although his dinner companions gradually grew so bored that they drifted off to bed while Hitler was still speaking.

In Berlin his landlord was a devout Nazi and antisemite who praised Hitler's "absolute purity" and raved about the occasions on which he had been graced by the Führer's presence. He also gossiped with party members about the true power struggle behind the 1934 "night of the long knives" purge and whether Goebbels was the real puppetmaster behind Hitler.

Beckett seldom contradicted his interlocutors but repeatedly noted his revulsion in the diary. After seeing an advert for the degenerate art exhibition, he wrote: "Soon I shall really begin to puke. Or go home."

He also encountered the Jewish artist Gretchen Wohlwill, who had been banned from showing or selling her paintings to anyone except Jews.

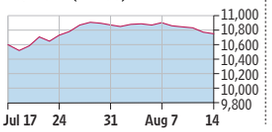
In Hamburg the authorities assigned him a companion called Claudia Asher, who bored him witless with her parroting of Nazi talking points. "She is tedious and her breath stinks," he wrote. "Her *Kraft durch Freude* [Strength through Joy, the regime's leisure organisation] conversation kills me." What he did not realise was that Asher was half-Jewish and risked severe jeopardy if she did not tread the party line.

In general, Beckett's distaste for the Nazis appears to have been primarily aesthetic and he preferred to keep it to himself. "I think many of us would want him to take a clearer [political] stand in the diaries than he does," Nixon said. "But at the same time we have to remember that this is a country under very heavy surveillance. We know he was very worried that the diaries would be checked [by the secret police]. My opinion is he holds back." He would later risk his life working as a translator for the Resistance in occupied France.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

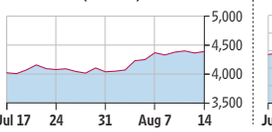
FTSE 100
10,750.11 (-22.56)



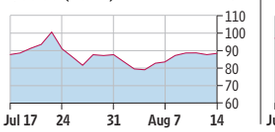
Dow Jones (midday)
53,717.94 (-122.05)

COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,389.76 (+24.09)



Brent crude (6pm)
$88.05 (+0.29)



CURRENCIES

£/$
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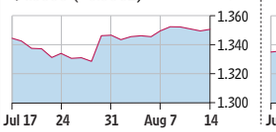

£/€
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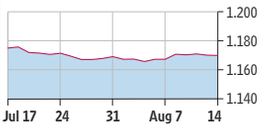


Google parent's early punt on SpaceX rockets in value to $100bn

Simon Freeman

In his days as a couch-surfing newcomer to Silicon Valley, Elon Musk regularly crashed at the Google co-founder Larry Page's Palo Alto apartment. Decades on, he has more than repaid the favour.

Alphabet's prescient $900 million investment in Musk's satellite-and-rockets start-up in 2015 has since multiplied more than 100-fold, lifting the value of the stake to almost $100 billion, analysis of quarterly filings suggests. It means that the Google parent was by far the largest single institutional holder of SpaceX following its blockbuster $1.8 trillion flotation in June.

The filings shed light on the scale of the positions acquired by SpaceX's main backers as it grew. Together with separate public disclosures on early investments, they also highlight how dramatically some early investments in SpaceX have grown.

Alphabet is relatively unusual among the earliest backers, having publicly disclosed the scale of its investment in what was then a private company.

It held 551.2 million SpaceX shares at the end of the second quarter, worth about $94.2 billion based on its June 30 share price of $170.86. Musk's company has had a rocky ride since going public, with the shares swinging between highs above $200 and lows of almost half that, but Alphabet's disclosed position would still be worth about $80 billion.

Fidelity Investments was the second-largest reported institutional holder, with 302.6 million SpaceX shares, followed by Gigafund Management with 171.8 million, Baillie Gifford with 51.4 million and BlackRock with 51 million.

Between them, they accounted for nearly three-quarters of reported SpaceX shares, highlighting the concentration of institutional ownership. Separately, SpaceX said in a regulatory filing that Musk owned a 48.4 per cent stake.

Steve Sosnick, a market strategist at Interactive Brokers, said that SpaceX remains one of the most actively traded stocks, receiving a "fresh jolt of buying last week, when market fears about what would happen when the first lock-up expiry arrived proved to be unfounded".

Musk's couch-surfing days were recounted by Page, who told his biographer, Ashlee Vance: "He'll email and say, 'I don't know where to stay tonight. Can I come over?'" The pair have since fallen out over their contrasting visions for the future of artificial intelligence.

Chancellor urged to stop budget leaks

Savings bosses warn Healey over tax changes

Ben Martin Financial Editor

The boss of one of Britain's biggest insurance and savings companies has warned the chancellor not to leak possible tax changes in the weeks before his first budget.

Dame Amanda Blanc, chief executive of Aviva, the FTSE 100 giant, said yesterday that she had asked John Healey directly to "not fly kites" and to crack down on rumours about the policies he might unveil on October 28.

Jason Windsor, the boss of Aberdeen Group, another FTSE 100 investments and savings company, also told The Times that Andy Burnham's new government "needs to engage the industry properly" before the budget.

Both budgets under Rachel Reeves, Healey's predecessor, were preceded by intense speculation in the months beforehand, particularly rumours that the government would cut tax-free pension lump sum withdrawals. Wealth management companies have said that the febrile atmosphere was highly damaging because it led some clients to rush to take advantage of the lump sum rules, even though on both occasions the Treasury did not cut allowances.

Blanc said that she had raised the issue with Healey last month. "Kite flying" refers to the government leaking potential policies to gauge the reactions of the public and markets.

"I made the point to say please don't do that, and he made the commitment that they weren't going to do that, so I hope that that is the case," Blanc said. "What we don't want is for customers to make decisions that in the long run they regret when policies are not changed."

Aviva has a huge pensions business and oversees £261 billion of assets overall in its wealth division.

Blanc, who was speaking as Aviva posted bigger-than-expected first-half profits, said "it was a significant amount of money that was taken out" of retirement pots by customers who were concerned that Reeves would lower the cap on withdrawals. Under the present regime savers are allowed from the age of 55 to draw down 25 per cent of their pensions tax free up to a limit of £268,275.

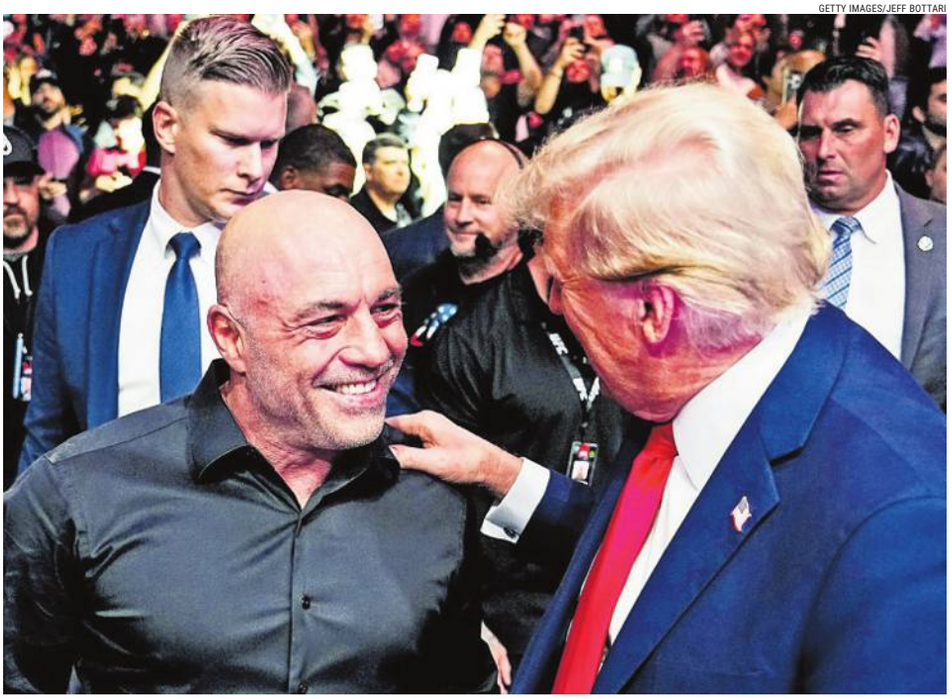
Aberdeen manages about £579.4 billion across its fund management and wealth businesses. Windsor said: "This new government needs to engage the industry properly to avoid unnecessary and damaging speculation to people's pensions."

Steven Levin, the chief executive of Quilter, a wealth manager that oversees £154.5 billion, also said: "Persistent speculation about changes to pension tax rules can create uncertainty and drive behaviour that is not always in savers' best interests."

Michael Summersgill, the boss of AJ Bell, which runs a DIY wealth management platform, wrote to Healey last month asking him to make "an early, public commitment" to leave pension tax-free cash entitlements untouched. He said the chancellor should "act quickly" to avoid a repeat of the "damaging instability" of previous budgets.

The Treasury said: "As has always been the case, the chancellor will set out decisions at fiscal events, rather than ... commenting on rumour."

GETTY IMAGES/JEFF BOTTARI



Legally speaking The podcaster Joe Rogan with Donald Trump in 2024. On the latest episode of The Joe Rogan Experience, he criticised the president over the sale of early access to market-moving social media posts, asking "How is that legal?"

'Material uncertainty' at Mothercare

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

Mothercare, the struggling retailer of baby products, has warned that "material uncertainty" hangs over its survival as it cited ongoing risks around its debt refinancing, pension deficit negotiations, and weak trading.

Shares in the London-listed retailer tumbled by 17 per cent on Friday after it reported a sharp decline in annual revenue and swung to a loss, hurt by the end of a UK deal with Boots and uncertainty in the Middle East.

The UK-based maker of products for parents and young children posted a pre-tax loss of £4.3 million in the year to March 28, compared with a profit of £11.9 million in the previous 12 months. Revenue fell 42 per cent to £22.4 million from £38.9 million, as worldwide retail sales generated by franchise partners declined 36 per cent to £180 million.

While Mothercare expects to operate with "sufficient cash" for the next year, it warned that failing to renegotiate its pension deficit and manage debt, or "if trading conditions were to deteriorate", could leave it with "insufficient cash" to "meet liabilities as they fall due". As a result, the board concluded that these combined risks create a "material uncertainty that casts significant doubt" on its ability to survive as a going concern "without utilising uncommitted or new financing facilities".

Mothercare, founded in 1961 by the entrepreneurs Selim Zilkha and Sir James Goldsmith, designs and supplies products from pregnancy through to age eight. It collapsed into administration in 2019, resulting in the closure of all 79 remaining physical stores. The business changed its strategy and became a global brand owner that designs and markets products sold through third-party partners in the UK.

Mothercare, whose shares have fallen by 95 per cent over the past five years, has continued to struggle amid stiff competition, a significant churn at the chief executive level and persistent issues in the Middle East.

Clive Whiley, the chairman, said the group's recent financial performance had been "resilient" as it entered the new financial year.

Need to know

1 The Crown Estate has been accused of potentially costing the taxpayer £140 million in lost revenue over the sale of a 15th-century plot of land that could be developed into 7,000 homes. Page 6

2 As autonomous vehicles take over the roads, thousands of jobs are likely to be replaced, claims Andrew Macdonald, president of Uber. Saturday Interview, Pages 36-37

3 The boss of one of Britain's biggest insurance and savings companies has warned the chancellor not to leak possible tax changes in the weeks before his first budget. Page 45

4 Alphabet's $900 million early investment in SpaceX has grown in value to almost $100 billion, analysis of quarterly filings suggests. Page 45

5 Mothercare, the struggling retailer of baby products, has warned that "material uncertainty" hangs over its survival as it cited ongoing risks around its debt refinancing, pension deficit negotiations and weak trading. Page 45

6 There has been an economic feel-good factor since Andy Burnham became prime minister a month ago, but an inflation shock may be around the corner. Page 48

7 The boss of Aviva has hailed a "very strong" first half for the FTSE 100 insurer after a turnaround of its Direct Line business helped fuel a bigger-than-expected rise in profits. Page 50

8 A former right-hand man of the Tchenguiz property tycoon brothers has been banned by the City regulator for false and misleading statements made in an attempt to buy Reading football club and a UK start-up bank. Page 51

9 The British cheese brands Cathedral City, Wensleydale and Davidstow are changing hands following a £1 billion deal between global dairy giants. Montreal-based Saputo Inc has agreed to sell its UK dairy division to French rival Lactalis. Page 52

"Sajid Javid quit No 11 because, he told MPs, he was not allowed to choose his own advisers

Ian King, page 49

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JD Sports boss shapes up

Chief executive has the backing of retailer's biggest shareholder, but investors want results, writes **Isabella Fish**

JD Sports Fashion

"Régis Schultz is under pressure," the retail analyst Nick Found says of the chief executive of JD Sports Fashion, who recently survived an attempt by the retailer's former chairman to remove him.

"When a chairman has tried to remove the chief executive, while margins and the share price have come under pressure, the next trading update becomes a test of management credibility as well as trading performance," Found adds.

That test arrives next week, when JD Sports Fashion reports its second-quarter trading figures.

For Schultz, the question is no longer whether he has the right strategy for the sportswear company — there is broad agreement that he is tackling many of the issues that needed fixing. Instead, the question is whether he can deliver results quickly enough to convince increasingly impatient shareholders that the work is paying off.

Schultz survived an attempt to remove him by Andy Higginson, the former chairman who ultimately left the business. JD Sports's largest shareholder, Pentland Group, backed the chief executive, taking a longer-term view despite frustration among some investors over the share price.

That leaves Schultz in an unusual position. He has the backing of the shareholder that controls more than half of JD, but he is also running a business whose shares remain far below their pandemic-era highs and whose underlying market remains difficult.

They have risen by 7 per cent in the past year, but remain 15 per cent below where they stood when Schultz joined in 2022. The stock has fallen from its closing peak of 233p in late 2021 to about 94p yesterday, which represents a decline of about 60 per cent.

In May JD forecast adjusted pre-tax profits of between £750 million and £850 million for the current financial year, compared with £852 million previously and a big decline from the £947 million reported in 2022.

Analysts are cautious about what the second quarter will show. Berenberg expects like-for-like sales to have fallen 1.7 per cent in the quarter to the end of July, with full-year like-for-like sales forecast to be down 1.5 per cent. Deutsche Bank is similarly cautious, modelling performance towards the lower end of JD's profit range.

The weakness is largely due to external factors. JD is attempting to rebuild while its core younger customer is under pressure. Persistent inflation and the cost of living squeeze have reduced discretionary spending, while weaker employment prospects and pressure on wages can make younger customers think twice before spending.

At the same time, the sports-fashion market is coming off the extraordinary pandemic athleisure boom. There is little expectation that athleisure will return to those peak growth rates.

JD's problem is that it needs enough product excitement to persuade consumers to spend even when they are cautious. Its biggest supplier, Nike, has also suffered from a period of weaker product momentum, while the popularity of individual brands and categories has shifted.

As one source close to the business put it: "You cannot recreate overnight the sort of product heat JD enjoyed when it could sell a particular Nike Air Force 1 that consumers could not find easily elsewhere."

That is where Schultz's strategy becomes important. He was appointed in 2022 to replace Peter Cowgill after governance issues as an outsider with a background in international retail and digital transformation.

He was previously president of retail at Al-Futtaim Group in the United Arab Emirates, overseeing a portfolio that included brands such as Ikea, Zara and Marks & Spencer. His career also included senior roles at Monoprix and Kingfisher's B&Q.

JD said at the time of Schultz's appointment that his experience in international retail and his track record in digitisation and multichannel growth were key reasons for choosing him.

That experience has shaped much of what Schultz has done. JD has been simplified, with a number of smaller fashion businesses sold, while the company's management has concentrated on its core sports-fashion.

At the same time, JD has pursued a more integrated "omnichannel" model,

Régis Schultz, whose background is in international retail and digital transformation,

US subsidiary of BAE 'sent technology to China'

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

An American subsidiary of BAE Systems is to pay $36 million in penalties for alleged breaches of US arms trafficking and defence secrets rules and has been put under a federal monitor to police its future conduct.

Britain's biggest defence contractor agreed to an administrative settlement with the US authorities for more than a hundred export violations including passing on technology to China.

BAE, which is listed in London, does more of its business in the US than the UK. About half its annual £32 billion sales are in America.

The company has had previous arms trafficking violations in the US, having paid out more than $450 million 15 years ago following allegations of bribery and corruption in the use of "marketing advisers" to secure government contracts. The latest fine for the company follows a series of breaches of information and technology to multiple sources in several jurisdictions. BAE has said there was a lack of understanding in its supply chain over what constituted a violation of export controls.

The charges include instances in 2023 when a BAE business was said to have sent technical data and design information on GPS satellite tracking technology to a Chinese manufacturer.

The US state department said BAE's staff had not been properly trained to identify red flags or red lines about their or the company's conduct.

Other violations include technical data sent to British and German operations without proper authorisation. The data sent to the UK concerned an explosive used by the US army that the company's staff apparently believed to be in the public domain. Information sent to Germany concerned negotiations on the construction of a dock in a Florida ship repair yard for a US navy destroyer.

One of the most recent violations alleged in the settlement took place last year, when BAE's UK operation sent a paint specification related to the rocket interceptor system of the F-35 fighter jet — which is partly built by BAE in Lancashire — to an unauthorised UK supplier.

BAE has previously said it had been taking on new staff and spending money on training programmes to prevent violations. However, the US state department has appointed an external compliance officer to audit its export controls programme for at least two years, with BAE paying the costs.

In its settlement, BAE may escape half the penalty if it can show that it will cut out future violations. BAE voluntarily disclosed all but one of the alleged violations, a substantial portion of which predate 2023.

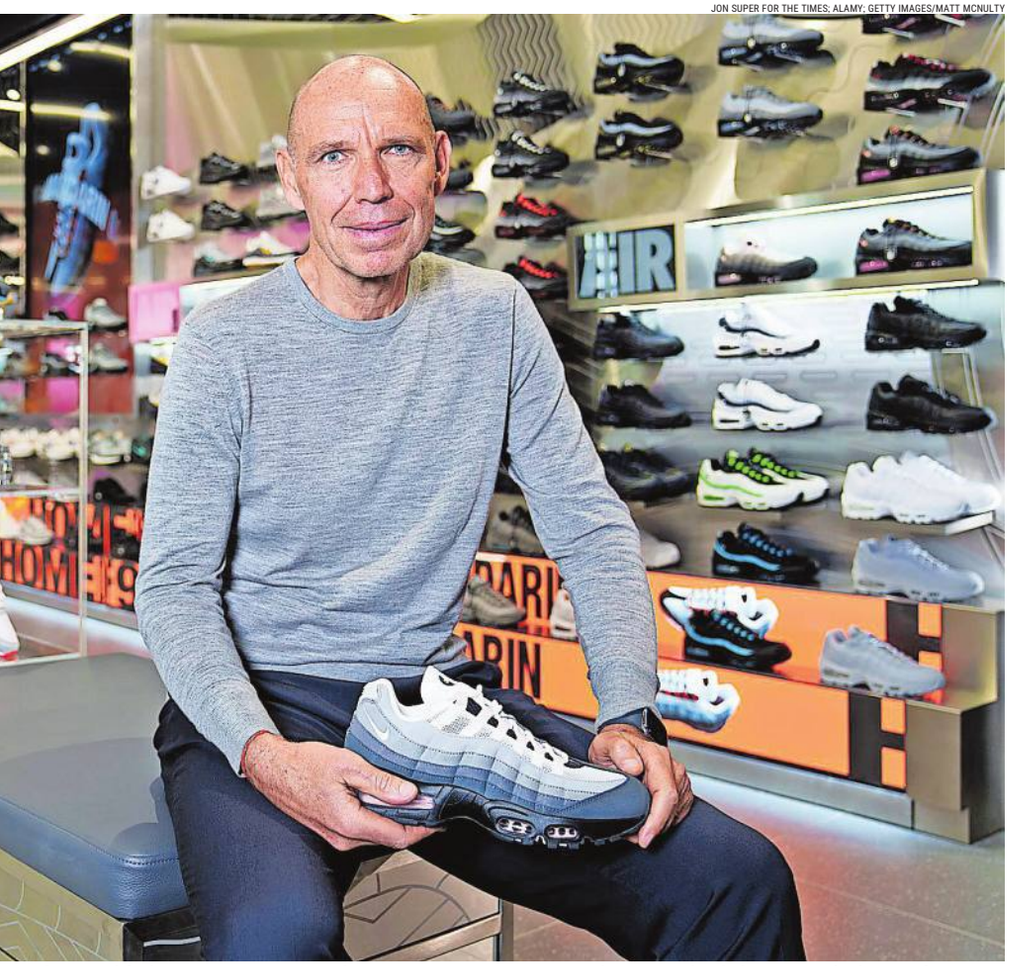
In the US, BAE works on some of the biggest and most sensitive defence programmes. In addition to working on F-35s it produces various armoured carriers including the Bradley fighting vehicle.

The company also looks after howitzer artillery systems and is involved in various missile warning and tracking systems and other combat support.

BAE Systems said it had "thoroughly co-operated" with the state department's review, and added: "We have been working diligently to implement improvements to our BAE Systems Inc compliance programme over the last several years and we will continue to do so. We take seriously our responsibility to protect critical information and support all our customers' security."

for a fresh test of his leadership

JON SUPER FOR THE TIMES; ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES/MATT MCNULTY



has simplified operations at JD Sports but now must appease investors disappointed with the company's share performance

JD Sports opened its biggest store in the Trafford Centre in Greater Manchester in June 2025, with a launch event hosted by the British YouTuber, Sharky, far left

blending stores and online retail rather than treating them as separate parts of the business.

Click and collect has been introduced and JD has invested heavily in its digital infrastructure. Its strategy now includes completing its global e-commerce replatforming, improving customer personalisation and accelerating the use of artificial intelligence.

One shareholder said it was mainly "all work going on in the background to maintain its competitive edge", but work that "when everything gets back on track it all tends to [be forgotten about]". The proposition has also become broader. JD has sought to work with brands where demand is strongest, including Hoka and On, rather than relying so heavily on the fortunes of Nike.

There is evidence that the work is laying the foundations for the next phase of the business. JD's acquisitions of Hibbett and Courir have increased its international scale, while the US has become the group's largest market.

But investors cannot buy foundations, they buy future earnings. That is the frustration underlying the debate around Schultz. Cowgill, the former boss who built JD Sports into a FTSE 100 retailer with a major US presence, has himself acknowledged his disappointment over the share price.

Dan Finley, the chief executive of Debenhams Group and a former JD executive, said in an interview with The Times that "all shareholders are disappointed with what's happened there. I hope it can get back to its best".

Pentland's position is different. The group's message to Schultz has effectively been: ignore the short-term share price and do the right things for the long term. That is a powerful vote of confidence, giving Schultz a little more time — but not an unlimited runway.

The arrival of Peter Agnefjäll as chairman could mark the next stage. The former Ikea chief executive is due to take over in September, replacing Higginson after the failed attempt to remove Schultz. His background in global retail and digital transformation fits closely with the direction JD is already taking.

For investors, however, the change at the top also raises the stakes. A new chairman creates an obvious moment to assess whether the existing strategy is working.

The bullish case is that JD is a fundamentally stronger retailer caught in a weak cycle. It remains cash generative, has international scale and relationships with the world's biggest sports brands.

BNP Paribas described it as the "king of cashflow", while Deutsche Numis argues that the business has made a strategic pivot away from acquisition-led expansion towards operational improvement, margin rebuilding and free cashflow generation.

The bear case is that investors have heard the turnaround story before and are still waiting for evidence that it is working.

JD has warned of "muted market growth" this financial year, while Deutsche Bank expects promotional activity to remain weighted towards the first half as the company responds to pressure on its core customer.

Berenberg also warned that unemployment could provide further downside risk.

There is still a credible case for Schultz. As Found puts it, JD Sports has spent much of his tenure doing the less glamorous work of modernising its operational backbone and integrating major acquisitions.

"JD remains a formidable retailer, with international scale, powerful brand relationships and strong cash generation but investor patience is wearing thin, and that investment now needs to translate into stronger returns," he says.

"Schultz now needs to show clear evidence that sales, margins and shareholder returns are moving in the right direction. It will ultimately determine whether he remains the right person to lead JD through its next chapter."

BP seals deal to tap vast gas field in Venezuela

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

BP has struck a deal to produce gas offshore of Venezuela, continuing the push of international oil majors into the South American country after the US captured the former president Nicolás Maduro in January.

The FTSE 100 energy group said it had been awarded an exploration and production licence for phase two of the Loran field, which contains an estimated four trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas within the Plataforma Deltana area. It has signed a memorandum of understanding covering potential exploration and production in another offshore area, Mariscal Sucre.

Meg O'Neill, BP's chief executive, signed the agreements during an official visit to Venezuela.

She said: "The award of the Loran phase two licence is an important step forward. It builds on the strong collaboration we have established with the government of Venezuela and our partners and reflects the progress we have made together.

"BP has a long-standing presence in the region and deep experience developing major gas resources.

"Together, these agreements provide a strong foundation to progress Venezuela's offshore gas potential and unlock the next phase of development."

The deal comes two months after BP's larger rival Shell was awarded a licence to produce phase one of the Loran field, which comprises 1.7 trillion cubic feet of gas. Shell will produce the gas via a pipeline to its Manatee platform in neighbouring Trinidadian waters, supplying the Atlantic liquefied natural gas plant.

BP said phase two was expected to be "delivered in parallel with phase one" but did not give further details of how it would be produced.

London-based BP is one of the world's biggest oil and gas groups, pumping the equivalent of 2.2 million barrels of oil per day. It reported profits of $5.7 billion in the second quarter.

O'Neill, BP's first outsider chief executive in its 117-year history, is overhauling the company and simplifying its portfolio, including the planned sale of its UK North Sea business.

The expansion in Venezuela marks a continued shift towards the Americas.

BP's licence has been granted in partnership with XRG and UCC Holding. XRG, where former BP boss Bernard Looney is a board member, is the international energy investment company of Abu Dhabi's Adnoc. UCC Holding is a Qatari conglomerate with links to the Trump administration.

We want our gold back, Caracas tells Bank of England

Venezuela wants to recover gold reserves worth an estimated $4 billion from the Bank of England as inflation surges to 20 per cent (Charlotte Bend writes).

The Bank refused to release 31 metric tons of the country's gold held in its vault because it did not recognise the legitimacy of Nicolas Maduro's government.

However, Jorge Rodriguez, the National Assembly chief who is the brother of Delcy Rodriguez, the acting president, has announced plans to try to reclaim the gold.

It has been the subject of a long-running legal battle since it was retained under British and US sanctions on Maduro's government. The gold has not been released despite Maduro's capture by the US in January and a request by Rodriguez to King Charles last month.

Both the Venezuelan government and opposition appeared to agree on recovering the gold, according to a joint statement that said the reserves were needed after earthquakes in June which killed more than 6,000 people.

The country's central bank reported this week that the disaster had contributed to inflation rising to 19.9 per cent in July.

Rodriguez said politicians had agreed to focus on projects aimed at rebuilding and "concentrate efforts to promote the recovery of Venezuela's international assets in the Bank of England".

The move comes after US-backed negotiations between the Venezuelan government and opposition figures.

Business

Burnham bounce may be heading back to earth

While GDP growth looks positive, there is an inflation shock around the corner, **Jack Barnett** reports

There has certainly been something of an economic feel-good factor since Andy Burnham succeeded Sir Keir Starmer as prime minister a month ago.

Growth has exceeded expectations to such an extent that the UK achieved the G7's largest increase in GDP over the first half of the year.

Inflation has fallen faster than forecast, in part prompting the Bank of England to steer clear of an interest rate rise in July. Consumer confidence rose at the quickest pace in nearly three years and recruiters have hailed a recovery in the labour market.

Given that most of this economic data is backward-looking, Starmer and Rachel Reeves, the former chancellor, would have good reason to feel some frustration, since the improvements largely came under their watch.

Indeed, after the release of the GDP figures, which showed the economy unexpectedly expanded by 0.3 per cent month on month in June thanks in part to the start of the World Cup, Reeves posted on X: "Lots done, more to do."

However, Burnham's economic honeymoon period may come to a crashing halt when new data is published next week that is expected to show inflation back on an upward path, sluggish consumer spending and pay growth down at a multiyear low.

On Wednesday the Office for National Statistics (ONS) will release figures that could show annual inflation hitting 3 per cent in July, which would be the largest month-on-month percentage point increase in over a year.

A rise in the household energy bill cap took effect in July, which will probably raise inflation in the month.

Ofgem, the energy regulator, set the cap at £1,862 a year for a typical household in the three months to September, a 13 per cent rise compared with the previous three months, reflecting the increase in oil and gas prices resulting from the conflict in the Middle East.

Analysts at Investec said: "We anticipate the headline inflation rate to have risen to 2.9 per cent from June's 2.6 per cent as July's increase to the Ofgem energy price cap looks set to erase the prior month's progress towards the 2 per cent inflation target."

Inflation is likely to continue rising throughout the second half of the year: the Bank of England expects it to stay at about 3 per cent for the rest of the year.

If the war in the Middle East carries on for some time, keeping oil prices close to $100 a barrel, the central bank predicts that inflation could exceed 4 per cent yet again.

A common theme among the six members of the Bank of England's nine-strong monetary policy committee who voted to leave interest rates unchanged at 3.75 per cent at the July meeting was that they did not believe inflation would get out of hand given current weakness in the labour market.

Pay growth in the private sector has dropped to a six-year low of 2.9 per cent and data from the ONS released on Tuesday is likely to show that trend continuing. Earnings in the public sector rose by 5.5 per cent year on year in the most recent quarter.

On the same day, according to analysts' predictions, the ONS is expected to say that the rate of unemployment held steady at 4.9 per cent in the quarter to June. Vacancies have started to rise and a closely watched survey from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and KPMG released this month showed that businesses did not cut full-time hiring for the first time since Liz Truss's short-lived premiership four years ago.

James Smith, developed markets economist at ING, said: "Expect the jobs market to remain fragile. Private-sector hiring, particularly in consumer services, remains weak."

Data due to be published next Friday, also from the ONS, may be the most closely watched as it will signal how much the government borrowed in July, the first month of Burnham's premiership. The figures will also provide a snapshot of the public finances for the first time since John Healey, the chancellor, announced that the budget would take place on October 28.

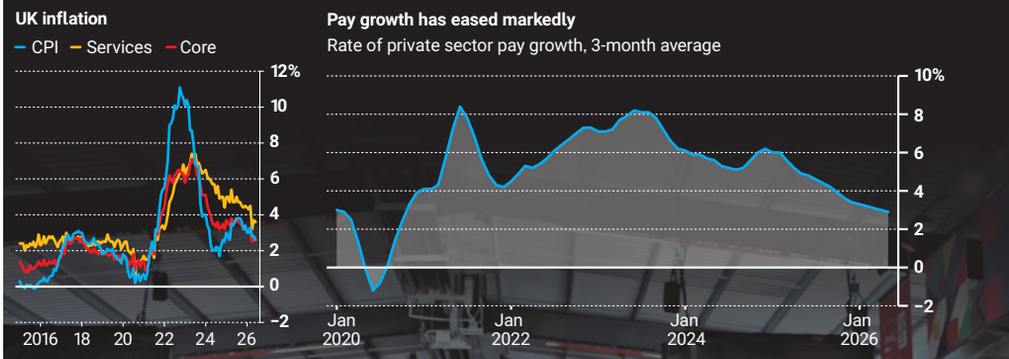
From the beginning of the financial year to June, the government borrowed £57.6 billion, down by 6 per cent compared with the same period the previous year, but £2.7 billion more than the Office for Budget Responsibility expected. Analysts believe that the government borrowed £500 million in July, when the deficit typically falls. This would put borrowing in the financial year to date close to £4 billion above the OBR's forecasts.

Ruth Gregory, the deputy chief UK economist at Capital Economics, said: "Easing pay growth and high inflation weigh on income tax receipts and raise debt interest payments."

Burnham's policy blitz, designed to cut the cost of living, such as capping most single bus journeys in England at

Rachel Reeves will claim some credit for increased growth

Fun and games



Cost of long-term US borrowing rises to highest in 25 years

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The yield paid by the United States government to investors who purchased its long-term debt has climbed to its highest level in 25 years.

In an auction of 30-year US Treasury bonds worth $25 billion on Thursday, yields attached to the debt climbed as high as 5.22 per cent, the steepest rate of return since 2001, when a batch of long-term bonds had a 5.52 per cent yield.

The auction compared with yields as high as 5.06 per cent in the previous sale of 30-year bonds in July and 4.91 per cent before President Trump began his second term in January 2025.

A separate auction of ten-year US bonds attracted the highest yield since 2007. Yesterday the yield on the 30-year bond rose to 5.23 per cent. Bond yields move inversely to prices once they are traded on secondary markets. The yield on the benchmark ten-year bond was largely stable at 4.65 per cent.

America's debt has swelled to nearly $40 trillion, pushing the debt-to-GDP ratio close to a record high.

The US Congressional Budget Office, a non-partisan watchdog, said that by 2036 the debt-to-GDP ratio would exceed its post-Second World War peak of 106 per cent.

Fiscal pressures have been exacerbated by Trump making big tax cuts in his "One Big Beautiful Bill".

Government bond yields have risen sharply over the past six months since the US and Israel launched air strikes on Iran which retaliated by closing the Strait of Hormuz, sending shockwaves through the global energy market.

Investors think there is a chance that the US Fed will raise interest rates this year, but a drop in inflation from over 4 per cent and a weakening labour market have reduced that likelihood.

The Bank of England has kept rates unchanged at 3.75 per cent, while the European Central Bank raised its main deposit rate by a quarter of a percentage point in June to 2.25 per cent.

Eurozone bond yields rose yesterday, with Germany's ten-year bond yield up five basis points to 3.19 per cent while UK government ten-year gilts were up 1.8 per cent at 5.05 per cent.

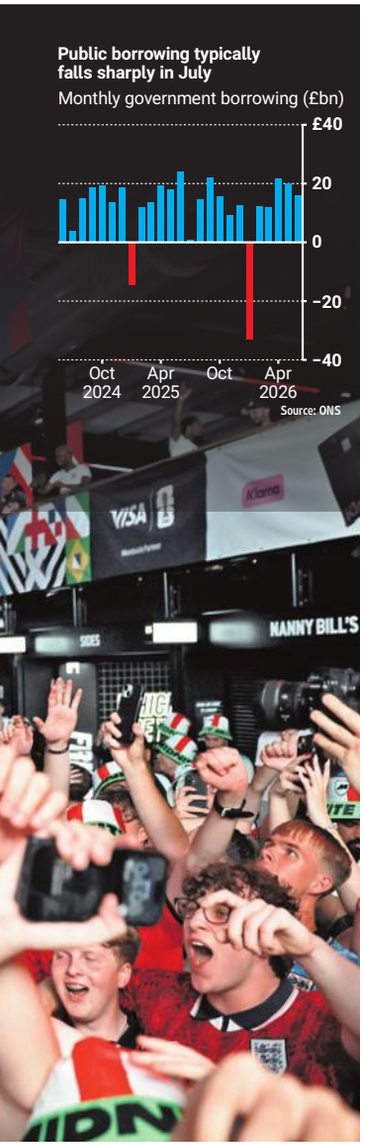
Fed expected to hold rates after retail sales fall

Retail sales in the US fell last month at the fastest pace in more than a year, which analysts suggested would further deter the Federal Reserve from raising borrowing costs next month.

Data published yesterday by the US Commerce Department showed that retail sales declined by 0.6 per cent in July, the largest drop since May 2025. The fall coincided with a drop in petrol prices after wholesale oil prices fell when the US and Iran signed a 60-day ceasefire, although the agreement is now effectively dead.

Analysts at the research consultancy Capital Economics said: "The fall in control group retail sales, together with downward revisions to growth in May and June, leave the consumer looking a little less healthy and further reduce the chance of the Fed hiking at its next meeting in September."

Recent data showed the annual inflation rate fell to 3.4 per cent in July from 3.5 per cent in June.



£2 and removing VAT from electricity bills, will not show up in the ONS data as the measures have yet to take effect.

Also on Friday the statistics agency is expected to say that consumer spending was sluggish in July after the World Cup finished and hot weather deterred shoppers from the high street.

Several other lower-tier surveys released this coming week will also paint a picture of the economy, the most closely watched of which will be GfK's consumer confidence data on Friday.

The latest iteration of that survey indicated that sentiment rose at its fastest pace since November 2023, which experts hailed as a "Burnham bounce".

Ian King

When a PM's economic advisers meet the Treasury, tension rules

Before his coronation as Labour leader, Andy Burnham's followers let it be known he was receiving informal advice from three prominent economists.

The presence of Lord O'Neill of Gatley, former chief economist of Goldman Sachs; Andy Haldane, former chief economist of the Bank of England; and Richard Hughes, former chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility, reassured investors that Burnham — whose previous pronouncements on the bond market hardly inspired confidence — would not play fast and loose with the fiscal rules.

All are well respected. Hughes distinguished himself with his honourable resignation after the OBR's report leaked on budget day last year while Haldane and O'Neill are original thinkers whose work on growing Britain's regional economies could provide intellectual ballast for what Burnham aims to do in that field. O'Neill was reportedly instrumental in Burnham's recent announcement promising regional mayors a share of income tax.

So The Times's revelation this week that O'Neill is yet to take up ministerial and advisory roles offered to him, due to concerns about potential wealth taxes, was deeply concerning. Failure to appoint at least one of the three would threaten the Burnham administration's economic credibility.

Recalling the tenures of previous prime ministerial economics advisers though, the trio could be forgiven for walking away, wealth taxes or not. For such advisers have frequently been embroiled in Whitehall power tussles and subject to unwanted publicity.

The classic example is Sir Alan Walters, Margaret Thatcher's economic adviser from 1981 to 1983, who returned to the role in 1989. That ultimately sparked the departure of Nigel Lawson, Thatcher's longest serving chancellor, whose highly readable memoirs, *The View From Number 11*, recount in detail his unhappiness at his rival's "hostile activities".

In fact, as was made clear in her own memoirs, *The Downing Street Years*, Thatcher did sometimes ignore advice offered by Walters. One such occasion was in the run-up to Sir

Geoffrey Howe's landmark 1981 budget, which sought to tackle both inflation and the high level of government borrowing, both of which were an impediment to cutting interest rates. The budget included a windfall tax on banks, duty increases and freezes in the personal allowance and tax thresholds.

However, in order to be tougher still on borrowing, Walters urged Thatcher and Howe to consider raising the basic rate of income tax by one or two per cent. This, Thatcher recalled, was ruled out: "Alan was the economist. But Geoffrey and I were politicians."

By 1989, though, circumstances were different. Thatcher — who would remind colleagues at times that the PM is First Lord of the Treasury — makes clear she did not take Lawson seriously when he threatened to resign and told him "not to be ridiculous". She describes Walters as "a devoted and loyal member of my staff who had given me frank and good advice".

But Lawson, who argued Walters had the "destructive powers" of an iceberg, was not to be dissuaded. He stated in his resignation letter to Thatcher that November: "The successful conduct of economic policy is possible only if there is, and is seen to be, full agreement between the prime minister and chancellor of the exchequer. Recent events have confirmed that this essential requirement cannot be satisfied so long as Alan Walters remains your personal economic adviser."

Those words encapsulate the tension risked between No 10 and No 11 when a prime minister appoints their own economic adviser.

That was highlighted when in 1964 Harold Wilson, that most calculating of PMs, appointed the first prime ministerial economic adviser of modern times, recruiting the Hungarian economist Thomas Balogh to provide expertise that he believed civil servants could not. Another Hungarian economist, Nicholas Kaldor, was placed at the Treasury but also ended up advising Wilson.

The pair clashed frequently with Treasury mandarins who nicknamed Kaldor "Buda" on account of his Buddha-like paunch and Balogh "Pest" because, unfortunately, that was how many regarded him.

Balogh, who as long ago as 1959 had been critical of the Treasury for its domination by "dilettante" generalists, was instrumental in advising Wilson to set up the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), a doomed experiment meant to curb the Treasury's power, while Kaldor was never trusted in the Treasury after arguing, shortly after Wilson was elected, that sterling should be devalued. He was proved right when, in November 1967, the government was forced into a 14 per cent devaluation of the pound.

It led to Wilson, on November 19 that year, making a television address during which he uttered a line that forever haunted him: "It does not mean that the pound here in Britain, in your pocket or purse or in your bank, has been devalued."

It was subsequently claimed that the line, not in the original Treasury script, was suggested by Balogh.

When Wilson returned to office in 1974, he extended the idea of receiving advice independent from the civil service, creating the No 10 Policy Unit and hiring Bernard Donoughue from the London School of Economics to run it. A key appointment was Gavyn Davies, later O'Neill's predecessor as chief economist at Goldman.

But there was not quite the same tension with the Treasury and that remained the case once Wilson was succeeded by James Callaghan.

Since Thatcher, prime ministerial economics advisers have largely been out of fashion, possibly because of the Walters episode and possibly because three later PMs — John Major, Gordon Brown and Rishi Sunak — had been chancellor. Such conflict as existed tended to be between PM and chancellor, most notoriously between Tony Blair and Brown.

However, proving that if history does not repeat itself it sometimes rhymes, Sajid Javid resigned as chancellor in February 2020 because, he told MPs, he had not been allowed by Boris Johnson's team to pick his own advisers. It was a reminder that tensions between No 10 and No 11 can still bubble to the surface. O'Neill, Haldane and Hughes will know this.

Ian King is a former business and City editor of The Times

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THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Activist escalates battle for retailer

The boardroom battle at The Works has intensified as the activist investor Kelso fights to get a seat for its nominee (Isabella Fish writes).

Shares in the discount retailer closed down 3p, or 3.4 per cent, at 85p yesterday after Kelso's rebuke of the company's resistance to appointing Graeme Coulthard, a former Card Factory director, to the board.

Kelso, which controls a 10 per cent stake, thinks The Works is undervalued and has requested that a resolution to appoint Coulthard to the discounter's board be considered at its annual general meeting on September 7. Coulthard holds an 8 per cent stake in the company.

Yesterday it dismissed warnings that Coulthard would undermine growth as "simply absurd".

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Gavin Peck, chief executive of The Works, the discount retailer which has struggled recently

The Works said on Thursday that it had written to Kelso expressing its opposition to the proposed appointment, but Kelso "subsequently confirmed that it remained intent on proceeding". The Works stated that its board "unanimously believes" the move would not be in shareholders' best interests.

It said that Coulthard had "limited experience as a director of a listed company and no executive experience in multi-site value retail", adding that the proposed appointment would "create unnecessary distraction" and "risk derailing delivery of [its] focused growth strategy".

Yesterday Kelso said it was "surprised and disappointed by the strength of [The Works'] response". It added that The Works' assertion regarding Coulthard's executive experience was "misleading".

The Works was founded in 1981 and floated in 2018 at 160p, which gave it a market value of £100 million. Its market cap is now about £50 million. It operates about 500 stores and has plans to open about 100 more UK outlets.

The Aim-listed retailer has struggled in recent years due to inflation, operational problems and an underperforming ecommerce operation.

The company, led by Gavin Peck, made the decision this year to shut down the ecommerce operation, which launched in 2012.

It has also been attempting to move the business away from its reputation as a "pile it high, sell it cheap" retailer.

The Works was contacted for comment.

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THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

Rescue of Direct Line fuels profits at Aviva

Ben Martin Financial Editor

A turnaround of the once-troubled motor insurer Direct Line has helped to fuel a bigger-than-expected rise in first-half profits at Aviva.

Operating profits at the FTSE 100 group increased by 24 per cent year-on-year to about £1.33 billion, beating the £1.26 billion that had been pencilled in by City analysts for the six months to the end of June, Aviva reported yesterday.

The number was buoyed by improving profitability at Direct Line, which Aviva bought for £3.7 billion a year ago. Dame Amanda Blanc, the chief executive, pounced on Direct Line after its share price slumped following a series of profit warnings and the deal has significantly boosted Aviva's operations in motor insurance. "We are incredibly pleased with the performance of the business and the integration," Blanc, 59, said.

The transfer of Direct Line's 8,000-plus employees into Aviva had been made "seamlessly" and Blanc's team has already achieved £100 million of the expected £225 million cost savings. Capital synergies of £150 million have been achieved and Aviva is "on track" for the remaining £350 million it has earmarked.

It is a further boost for Blanc, who has overseen a big reversal in Aviva's fortunes since July 2020, when she took charge. Aviva is Britain's biggest composite insurer, offering both life and general cover, as well as pensions and savings products. It serves more than 25 million customers.

Investors had long been frustrated with the company's lacklustre stock market returns, which Blanc moved quickly to remedy by selling off a string of non-core businesses that Aviva had in overseas markets.

The buyout of the motor insurer was a gamble for Dame Amanda Blanc

The sale proceeds turbocharged capital returns by the insurer, which has handed back more than £10 billion to its shareholders since 2020, including the declaration of 14p a share interim dividend yesterday.

The next stage of Blanc's strategy has focused on growing Aviva and has involved several acquisitions. Buying the struggling Direct Line, however, was by far her biggest gamble. She said yesterday that her team had managed to lift the motor insurer's profitability while also maintaining its "excellent customer service".

Wealth also enjoyed a strong first half of the year. Net inflows at the division rose by 32 per cent to £7.6 billion, boosted by an increase in workplace pensions.

Assets under management rose by 12 per cent to £261 billion and it now has 5.9 million wealth customers.

Like other companies across the economy, Aviva is increasingly using artificial intelligence to boost the efficiency of its roughly 40,000 employees. Using it in its fraud analytics models was said to be generating an annual benefit of £100 million, and there was a £200 million underwriting lift from deploying AI in its pricing models, Blanc said.

She said the economic fallout from the war in the Middle East was not hurting Aviva and that there were no signs that customers were cutting pension contributions because the inflationary impact of the conflict was pushing up the cost of living.

The recent wildfires in the UK were not "a material event" for Aviva, either, although like other insurers it has been affected by Canadian wildfires. Natural catastrophes in Canada such as hailstorms and flooding are "pretty par for the course", Blanc said.

Blanc is also the senior independent director at BP and is leading the search for a new chairman of the oil major to replace Albert Manifold, who was ousted by its board in May amid allegations about his conduct, which Manifold has strongly denied. Blanc also ran the search that led to Manifold's appointment.

Asked yesterday whether her BP duties were proving a distraction from Aviva, Blanc said: "Nice try, but this is the Aviva results and that's what we're going to be talking about today."

Aviva shares closed up 13p, or 1.8 per cent, at 726½p.

Ex-finance boss lied in attempt to buy Reading FC

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

A former right-hand man of the Tchenguiz property tycoon brothers has been banned by the City regulator for false and misleading statements made in an attempt to buy Reading football club and a UK start-up bank.

Paul Taylor, the former chief executive and owner of Blue Horizon Asset Management, has been fined £489,000 and barred from working in financial services by the Financial Conduct Authority.

The regulator found that Taylor, 63, a veteran of the financial services industry, made misleading statements and falsified information during separate attempted acquisitions of Reading and an unnamed UK bank.

The FCA's investigation found Taylor had falsified, or arranged to be falsified, documents claiming to be the owner of a bond portfolio worth about €200 million.

Taylor, who was once a cashier for a NatWest bank branch in East Sheen after briefly working as a bricklayer, became a key figure in highly leveraged deals during the property boom.

He made his name working with Robert and Vincent Tchenguiz, the property tycoons, at Rotch and Consensus, and went on to run the Qatari-backed Three Delta corporate finance firm where he led an unsuccessful £10.6 billion bid for J Sainsbury in 2007 and amassed a large care home portfolio.

The FCA's investigation found that between December 2023 and October 2024 Taylor dishonestly made false and misleading statements over the attempted £37 million bank acquisition and Reading purchase.

Esmeralda Toni, Blue Horizon's former managing director, has also been fined £121,200 for serious misconduct and banned by the FCA.

Toni was found to have knowingly assisted Taylor by making misleading statements to the bank and by helping falsify documents.

"Mr Taylor knew, and Ms Toni understood that it was likely, that these statements and documents would be relied upon by the FCA and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) as part of their assessment for the proposed acquisition," the FCA said.

ALAMY

Paul Taylor, a former associate of property tycoon Robert Tchenguiz, below, unsuccessfully bid for Reading, in the blue

The FCA found that they intended to mislead Blue Horizon colleagues, counterparties and regulators.

Therese Chambers, joint executive director of enforcement and market oversight at the FCA, said: "Trust in financial services relies on those working in it to be honest.

"Mr Taylor and Ms Toni fell woefully short of even this minimum expectation. They lied and lied again, first for commercial gain and then to cover their backs. They have no place in our industry."

Taylor's fine was discounted by 30 per cent from £698,600 as he agreed to resolve the dispute and similarly Toni's was reduced from £173,100. In Taylor's dealings with the FCA during his attempt to buy the bank, he told officials that he never intended to use the bond portfolio to fund the acquisition, according to the FCA.

Instead the information was provided "to ensure exclusivity and to enable the acquisition to progress, in order to reach a stage where Mr Taylor would have access to alternative sources of funding to complete the acquisition".

According to the FCA, Taylor said in an interview with the regulator that "it's common practice for people to purport to have funds to purchase businesses and then try to raise it subsequently".

A spokesman for Blue Horizon, which is now under new leadership and ownership, said: "The FCA's action is against individuals, not the firm. As the FCA makes clear, no criticism is made of either Blue Horizon or its parent company, Blue Group Holdings Ltd.

"The individuals acted in breach of the standards and controls the firm expects of anyone acting in its name."

The spokesman said: "No client suffered harm or loss as a result of their actions. Blue Horizon remains well capitalised, with regulatory capital comfortably in excess of its requirements, and continues to operate and trade normally."

He added: "The firm notified the FCA promptly after becoming aware of inaccuracies in information which had been provided to the regulator. It then commissioned an independent investigation by an external law firm.

"The investigation's report together with the underlying materials was shared with the FCA, under the oversight of the firm's senior governance.

"The FCA subsequently opened its own investigation into the matters identified through the firm's review and Blue Horizon co-operated fully throughout."

Taylor was approached for comment.

JP Morgan debanked prediction market firm

Chris Dorrell
Technology Business Correspondent

One of the largest prediction markets companies was debanked by JP Morgan last year in a sign of enduring corporate unease with the controversial industry.

Polymarket was notified by the Wall Street giant that it needed to find a new bank in October, according to the Financial Times.

At the time, Polymarket had been barred from the US market after the Commodity Futures Trading Commission took action against the company in 2022 for operating an unregistered derivatives trading platform.

The American agency allowed Polymarket to re-enter the market last year, reflecting a change in the wider regulatory environment following President Trump's re-election, although the commission still has an investigation under way into the company.

JP Morgan has not completely cut ties with the company, and could look to play an underwriting role if Polymarket were to go public. JP Morgan declined to comment.

Polymarket said that it maintained a "close, active relationship with JP Morgan across multiple entities, operational integrations and material handling of customer fund flows. Any suggestion otherwise fundamentally mischaracterises our relationship."

$130bn
Value of trades this year on prediction markets Polymarket and Kalshi

Companies such as Polymarket allow users to place bets on anything from upcoming Federal Reserve interest rate decisions to the dates of military strikes and aliens arriving by Christmas.

The industry has massively gained in popularity in the last two years after a US court allowed Kalshi, the largest prediction market platform, to list bets on the 2024 general election.

Last year, Kalshi and Polymarket — the two largest platforms — generated $50 billion in online trades, and this year the two companies have already surpassed $130 billion.

Polymarket is said to be raising $1 billion at a valuation of $20 billion in its latest funding round, which would more than double the $8 billion valuation it secured last October.

However, there are concerns about the addictive nature of event trading, and the sector has faced questions about market manipulation.

More than a dozen states have taken legal action against Polymarket and Kalshi.

A report in the Wall Street Journal indicated that Polymarket had conducted a misleading marketing campaign, in which social media influencers appeared to win money when they had not put any money down.

This week, New York city council sent a letter to major prediction market companies, including Polymarket, accusing them of using predatory practices to exploit young traders.

"We look forward to engaging with the New York city council on this matter," Polymarket said.

Polymarket was separately contacted for comment after the report about its relationship with JP Morgan.

FTSE 250 at a high despite GB Group's humbling

MARKET REPORT

Investors hate nasty surprises, particularly on a sunny summer Friday, and GB Group's gloomy trading update did not go down well (Robert Miller writes).

The FTSE 250 company, which specialises in digital identity verification, location intelligence and fraud prevention, cut its full-year revenue guidance after weaker-than-expected trading in its Americas Identity arm.

While first-quarter revenue from the business may have only been marginally below plan, GB Group said that growth had failed to improve during the second quarter.

The lower guidance, coupled with the exit of the company's Americas chief revenue officer, Tom Schutz, had shareholders heading for the door. By the close, the stock had fallen a mighty 71½p, or 30.9 per cent, to 160½p, the worst daily percentage drop since GB Group joined the London market in 2025.

The good news, though, is that despite GB's fall, the FTSE 250 not only managed a very credible rise on the day of 29.71 points, or 0.1 per cent, to 24,867.42 but it closed at a new high just a week after the previous record, and achieved a weekly rise of 0.1 per cent.

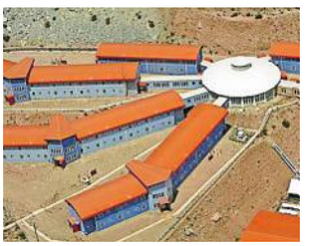
The more UK-focused index owes much of its gains to a pair of recruiters, a sector that has been in a downturn for three years. UBS analysts were the catalysts after upgrading **Michael Page** to "buy" from "neutral", which lifted the shares 10½p, or 5.3 per cent, to 205½p. The bullish outlook injected fresh optimism into the wider recruitment sector and gave **Hays**, which publishes its annual results on Thursday, a gain of 3½p, or 5.3 per cent, to 69.10p.

The FTSE 100 had a week to forget, failing to deliver one positive session in five days and snapping a four-week winning streak. On the day the index was down 22.56 points, or 0.2 per cent, at 10,750.11, a weekly fall of 1.4 per cent.

Given their heavy weighting, miners were the biggest drag. **Antofagasta** extended losses, down 171p, or 4.6 per cent, at £35.85, after cutting its 2026 copper output forecast due to heavy rains and repairs at its Los Pelambres mine in Chile. **Glencore** shed 12p, or 2.1 per cent, to 549p in a broader pullback in the commodities sector.

Wall Street report

Indices surrendered early gains yesterday after oil prices swung higher as concerns persist over when tankers will exit the Strait of Hormuz. By early afternoon, the S&P 500 was down 21.53 points, or 0.3 per cent, at 7,776.66 as the Nasdaq had dropped 127.20 points, or 0.5 per cent, to 26,675. The Dow Jones industrial average was 143.84 points, or 0.3 per cent, lower at 53,694.92.



Miners' quarters at Antofagasta's Los Pelambres copper mine in Chile

Business

French giant wolfs down Wensleydale in global dairy deal

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

The British cheese brands Cathedral City, Wensleydale and Davidstow are changing hands after a £1 billion deal between global dairy giants.

Montreal-based Saputo Inc has agreed to sell its entire UK dairy division to French rival Lactalis, the world's largest dairy company and owner of Président, Leerdammer, Galbani and Parmalat.

The transaction, which values the business at an enterprise value of about £988 million, includes five UK manufacturing facilities alongside the cheese portfolio and popular spread brands Clover and Country Life.

Saputo, which is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, built its British dairy portfolio through two acquisitions.

In April 2019, the Canadian group secured Cathedral City, Davidstow, Clover and Country Life by acquiring British manufacturer Dairy Crest in a £975 million takeover. Two years later, in July 2021, Saputo added Wensleydale to the line-up by purchasing the independent North Yorkshire maker Wensleydale Dairy Products Limited for £23 million.

Carl Colizza, Saputo's president and chief executive, said the deal would give the group more financial flexibility and "sharpen our focus on platforms where Saputo competes from a position of strength." The UK operation generated about $1.2 billion (£886 million) in revenues during the past year, which represents 7 per cent of its total revenues.

Saputo's non-UK brands include Armstrong and Dairyland in Canada, Frigo Cheese Heads and Montchevre in the US, Devondale in Australia and La Paulina in Argentina.

The company expects the sale to close by the end of the first quarter next year and said it is subject to certain conditions, such as regulatory approvals. All 1,300 employees will transfer to Lactalis.

Colizza said the deal "reflects a disciplined step to refine our global footprint. The value to be realised recognises the expertise of the UK team, the quality of the operations and the market position of these leading brands".

He added: "This transaction reinforces our strategic focus and enhances our financial flexibility as we continue to create long-term shareholder value through disciplined capital allocation."

The French multinational Lactalis is the largest dairy company in the world by annual revenue and turnover, generating more than $35 billion.

Headquartered in Laval, it remains a family-owned business led by chief executive Emmanuel Besnier, the founder's grandson. The group operates more than 260 production facilities in more than 50 countries and employs about 85,000 people.

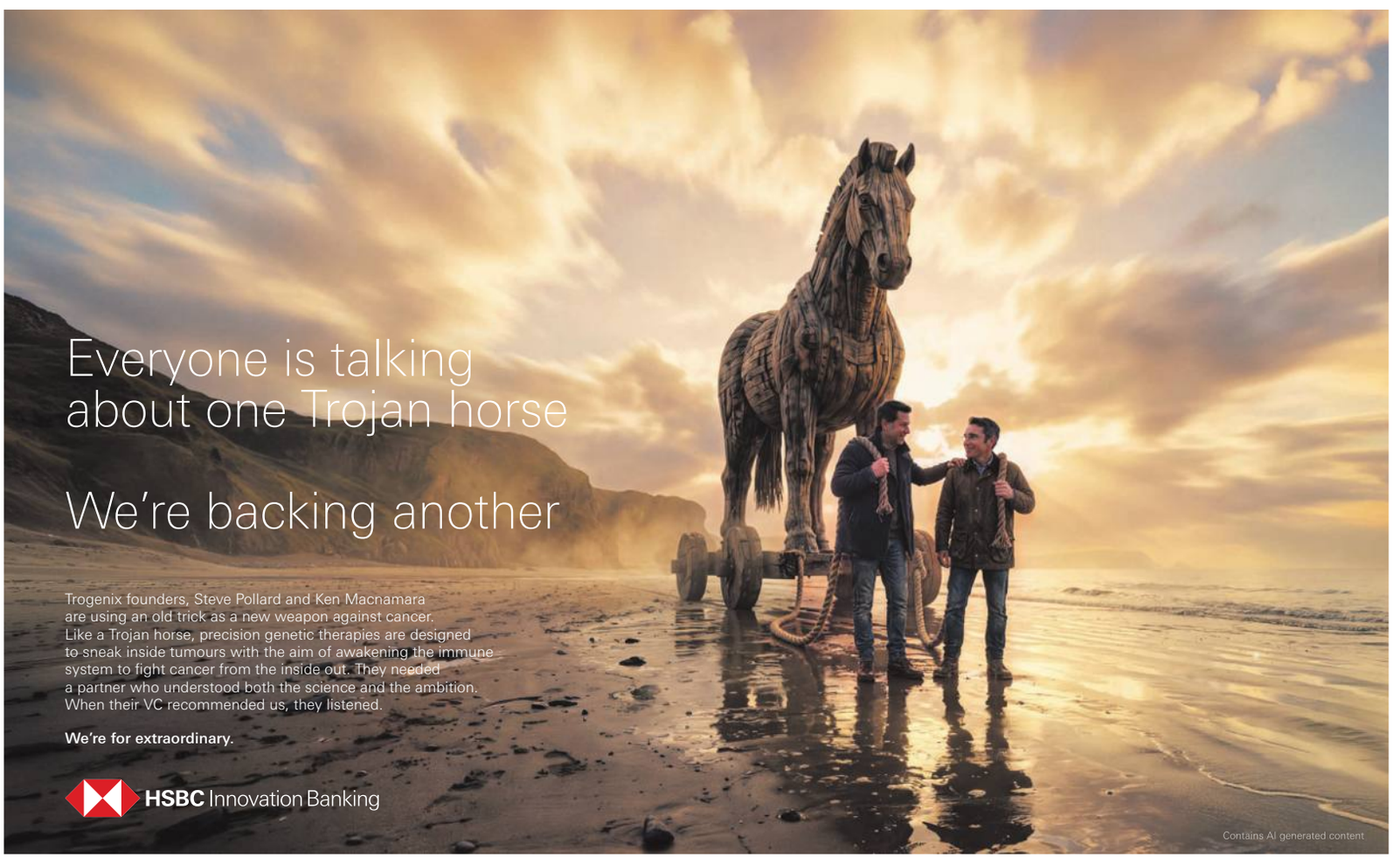
It operates a vast portfolio anchored by major international dairy flagships like Président, Galbani, Parmalat, Sigi's and Kraft Natural Cheese. Its roster also includes popular regional brands such as Leerdammer, Stonyfield Farm and Canada's Cracker Barrel.

This week, the dairy giant behind Lurpak and Cravendale warned that a shortage of skilled young workers was threatening Britain's food security. Arla Foods, a large dairy co-operative that supplies British supermarkets, said its farmers were struggling to fill vacancies because of a lack of qualified candidates, while more than half reported that retaining employees had become harder since Brexit and Covid.

The company, which employs about 3,700 people in the UK and works with 1,900 farmers, said that hiring problems had grown from a "labour shortage to a wider skills challenge that could have implications for the long-term resilience of British food production if left unaddressed".

GETTY IMAGES/CHRISTOPHER FURLONG

Wensleydale, made in North Yorkshire, and Clover, advertised by John Lydon, left, are among the brands sold by Saputo



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Let the games begin! Roman scholar who became boss of Candy Crush

Todd Green wants mobile gaming and its millions of players taken seriously, by **Christopher Dorrell**

Green at Bubala, a vegetarian restaurant in Soho. His parents were hippies and he remembers he and his brothers being the only vegetarians in their school

Todd Green, the president of King, an Anglo-Swedish video game developer and publisher, never intended to go into the games industry.

Having completed a master's in late Roman history at Nottingham in 2005, Green was all set to do a PhD, but he never started. "I thought I'd better do one year of real work outside of academia, otherwise I'm going to be in the library the rest of my life," he said.

If Green was looking for a career path that had a clear impact on people's lives, then it was a wise decision. More than 200 million people play one of King's games every month. Scholarship of the late Roman Empire has not had that kind of breakout success since Edward Gibbon published the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in 1776.

The crown jewel of King's catalogue is *Candy Crush,* which has become part of the fabric of everyday life. Almost everyone will have peered over a shoulder on the train and seen a commuter move colourful confectionery around a screen. This includes Green himself, who describes the experience as "humbling".

We meet in Bubala, a stylish Middle Eastern vegetarian restaurant in Soho near King's London offices. Green is a vegetarian and has been since he was a child. "My parents were hippies in the Seventies and became vegetarians. Me and my brothers were brought up vegetarian, and we were definitely the only vegetarians in our school in the Eighties and Nineties, that's for sure," he says.

However, not all of his family have stuck to the vegetarian diet. "My little brother moved to Argentina and quickly realised red wine was not a sufficient diet, so started eating meat. My other brother's gone vegan, so we're spreading out across the map."

We order the Bubala mezze for two. The dishes arrive slightly irregularly throughout the conversation, making it difficult to construct an entirely coherent meal, but there were no complaints about the plates themselves. For an umami fan, the oyster mushroom skewers were a particular favourite.

Green has been the president of King for just over a year, having been appointed in June last year, but he was at the company for 13 years before that, including four years leading the *Candy Crush* team. Before joining King, Green worked at Fremantle, a TV production company behind shows like *The X Factor* and *Britain's Got Talent*. Green credits his time there with building an interest in creating something that connects with a mass audience.

"A common misunderstanding of those shows is that they're very simple," he says. "On the surface it looks simple, you need to be able to follow the action, but really what's happening is you're going on a kind of emotional journey with the contestants."

The switch to games came after Fremantle began building a majority stake in Ludia, the Canadian-games studio, in 2009. Green became the point of contact between the two companies, helping to keep Fremantle's executives up to date with the latest news in the gaming industry. It was through this work that he first came across King, Green tells me as the "smacked" cucumber arrives. The dish makes me wonder why I ever leave my cucumbers unsmacked.

Across his time at Fremantle and King, Green says that a common thread has been the attempt to create something simple, accessible, and that people want to keep coming back to.

"What we're trying to do, basically, is to pack as much fun as possible into two or three minutes. Our games aren't for loading up on the TV in the front room to play for two hours. Every second counts, every action counts," he says.

While it may be fun for the player, it can be painstaking work for King. With *Candy Crush,* it has even involved getting to grips with the physics of falling sweets.

"Most players wouldn't be able to describe it, but if you drop a sweet now, it slightly accelerates as it goes down ... When it hits the row, there's a tiny bounce, just as it would on a real floor with a real sweet. It creates this feeling of physicality and responsiveness," Green says. "We've spent thousands of hours on that."

At the time of the interview, the game had 23,000 levels, although 60 are added each week. Thousands of people are waiting "at the end of the game" for new levels to drop. The company mines data from its users to understand which levels are working well, and which are not, so that they can continually be improved.

These efforts to continually update and improve on existing versions of the games reflect a "paradox" of the mobile games industry, Green says. "Thousands of new games are launched every year, but that doesn't create behaviour where players are switching every day. The top ten games are very similar to last year."

Indeed, *Candy Crush* has been in the top ten on Apple's App Store since 2013. A cynic might argue that its staying power reflects the fact the company has perfected its design to such an extent that players cannot resist the dopamine hit of completing the next level.

So are the players addicted? Green argues that none of King's games are designed to be addictive. "The most important thing to us is the long-term relationship with players," he said, pointing out King's games have few of the more invasive features designed to keep players coming back, such as penalties for not playing regularly.

"We want to try and make it very forgiving. So, let's say if you don't play next week, you don't play even for another month, you come back, all of your progress is there," he says.

While *Candy Crush* is the most famous, it is only one of many games in King's catalogue. Others include *Farm Heroes, Bubble Witch Saga* and *Pet Rescue Saga.* The company is keen to stress that gaming — and mobile gaming in particular — is often underestimated in policy discussions.

Research published by King this year showed that 61 per cent of the European adult population played games on smartphones or tablets in 2025. The company has been trying to highlight that typical perceptions of "gaming" do not match reality.

"Stereotypically, a 'gamer' is a young male playing console games or PC games in the dark," Green says. "But we have people who play our games multiple days a week over many years, who would never describe themselves as a gamer. Surely, by any definition, somebody who plays games every day is fitting that category."

King is now part of Microsoft, following the tech giant's acquisition of Activision in 2023 (King was taken over by Activision in 2016). Last month, the company confirmed that it was significantly restructuring its gaming division. Although King escaped the cuts, the company will now report directly to Asha Sharma, Xbox's chief.

Green argued that it didn't change the company's strategic relevance. "Microsoft bought us for a purpose, because we specialise in mobile, which is a huge market," he says. "More than half of the revenue in the games industry is going to mobile these days."

It is clear that Green has not forgotten his interest in Roman history. Far from it: he has developed an AI agent that keeps him up to date with the latest research in ancient history, scanning new book reviews, journal articles, and the social media feeds of leading academics.

"On Sundays I get a survey covering 40 languages — all the Mediterranean languages, plus a bunch of east European ones — and 16 different disciplines, and there's all sorts of interesting discoveries," he says. "I've always been a bit of a tinkerer." Could a PhD still be on the cards after his work at King is done? "If they'll have me," Green replies.

CV

Age: 42
Education: Undergraduate degree in modern history at Oxford (2001-2004); master's in ancient history, Nottingham University (2004-2005)
Career: FremantleMedia from graduate trainee to head of digital strategy, TV formats (2005-2012); King, director of casual games, general manager of *Candy Crush*, president (London) (2013-present)
Family: Lives with his wife and children

RECEIPT

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James Marriott in Edinburgh: The Dawn of the Post-Literate Society

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Money

How to spot the new status symbols
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I lived in an old care home to get cheap rent
Page 59

Mum paid Sky £1,200 for TV she can't watch
Your Money Matters, page 61

ILLUSTRATION BY NINA KRAUSE

Why aren't there more female breadwinners?

Men still tend to bring home more of the family bacon — but is that because they are useless at home? **Imogen Tew** looks at how the division of domestic labour affects women

Women outnumber men at university. They account for the majority of practising doctors for the first time and make up almost half of all video gamers. Andy Burnham's cabinet is the first to have more women than men. Women make up 45 per cent of the boards of FTSE 100 companies. In some corners equality is in full swing.

In others the world remains stubbornly skewed towards men. Male surgeons still outnumber female surgeons by five to one. Three of the top four government jobs are now taken by men after the departures of Rachel Reeves and Yvette Cooper. And nine out of ten chief executives of FTSE 100 companies are male.

Then there is the case of the female breadwinner.

In 2004 — when five of Tony Blair's 22-strong cabinet were female, women were banned from serving in frontline combat roles and a younger prince outranked an older princess in the line of succession — about 20 per cent of women earned more than their male partner.

Two decades and plenty of progress in gender equality later, and the figure has only crept up to 26 per cent.

WHAT IS GOING WRONG?

So why the disparity? Some of the causes have been around for years and show disappointingly little sign of disappearing. Women are more likely to take time off work after having children, which means that their earnings suffer. By the time a first child reaches the age of 20, mothers earn about 30 per cent less than similarly educated fathers, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the UK's leading economic think tank.

Caring responsibilities, both for children and for elderly parents, also typically push more women towards part-time or more flexible work. They pay the penalty that follows in lost income and lower pension savings.

The American economist Claudia Goldin found that what she calls "greedy" occupations — high-pressure, high-paying jobs where promotions matter — pay disproportionately more per hour than more flexible roles.

Effectively, women lose not only by working fewer hours, but also because they lack the flexibility to control the times when those hours fall.

While there has been plenty of noise about boosting women in the workplace — increasing numbers in management positions, aiming for 50-50 boards and launching "get back to work" schemes for those returning after having children — a new wave of research has been looking at another aspect that might be keeping the numbers down: the household.

> "A woman can be the breadwinner, but it's harder to escape having to make the bread as well

"One real issue is the mismatch between changing economic realities and gender expectations at home," said Joanna Syrda, an economist at the University of Bath.

"Put simply, the labour market is changing much quicker than household norms. A woman can become the breadwinner, but it's harder for her to escape having to make the bread as well."

Inside, we look at how couples tackle the housework — and what happens when men earn less.

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Money

‘I had no issue with Maria earning all of our money’

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

As women continue to do the lion’s share of the domestic work, we look at what this means for their chances of true financial equality.

In theory attitudes towards traditional gender roles are dissipating. According to the British Social Attitudes Survey from the National Centre for Social Research, a charity, the share of those questioned who agreed that “a man’s job is to earn money and a woman’s is to look after the home and family” fell from 48 per cent in 1987 to 9 per cent in 2022.

Those who believed that a preschool child was likely to suffer if their mother worked fell from 46 per cent in 1989 to 21 per cent in 2022, while those agreeing that “a job is all right but what most women really want is a home and children” fell from one in three to one in ten.

However, research by the economist Demik Getik from Durham University Business School suggests that as wives began to earn more than their husbands, the likelihood of one of the couple having a mental health diagnosis increases. Getik looked at couples in Sweden over ten years and found that those where the woman became the main breadwinner were 8 per cent more likely to have a mental health issue overall. The men alone were 11 per cent more likely. The paper was published in the Economic Journal in 2024.

Maria MacDonald, above, was the main breadwinner and took her baby into work while Brett had to be on site building their business

When Syrda investigated the relationship between a husband and wife’s relative income and the man’s psychological distress, she found that the man’s sweet spot was 60-40 in his favour — enough to diversify the income stream but not so much that he was no longer the main earner.

“If the wife is making nothing and he is making 100 per cent of the family income, he has high stress as the sole breadwinner. At about 40 per cent — when he is still making the majority — that is when stress is lowest,” Syrda said.

“Once the woman begins to earn more than half, the stress starts going up again, and once she is earning 70 per cent his stress actually increases to more than when he was the only earner.”

Academics from the US and Singapore found that there are far fewer couples where the wife earns slightly more than her husband than you would expect, based on statistics. This implies that couples deliberately keep the balance of earnings in line with gender norms, limiting the number of female breadwinners.

> “Men were more likely to overreport their contribution to housework — except when their wives earned more than them

‘AT THE END OF THE DAY YOU STILL WANT TO BE A WIFE’

Rosie Hamilton (her name has been changed) was the main breadwinner in

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her marriage for ten years, working in the legal sector before launching her own law firm. She earned about ten times more than her husband, who she is amicably divorcing.

"The roles in our marriage gradually changed. Suddenly you have more meetings, you have to work late and he had to step in more," said Hamilton, 39. "Your relationship changes too. You need to work on it to ensure it doesn't take away the romantic side. At the end of the day you still want to be a wife."

Hamilton said that her ambition and earnings contributed to the separation, and she now notices that her high income affects her dating life too.

She said: "There is a level of insecurity in men. I see it in my clients and on dates. When you take on the role of paying bills or contributing more so you can have a better holiday, that affects some men's feelings of inadequacy."

ARE WOMEN STUCK DOING IT ALL?

While most couples may say that they believe household tasks are a joint responsibility, it rarely plays out that way.

The British Social Attitudes Survey found in 2022 that about 80 per cent of those polled thought jobs such as household shopping, making the evening meal and cleaning should be shared equally in heterosexual relationships. About 10 per cent said that the woman should mainly do those jobs, while 1 per cent thought mainly the man.

When it came to reality, 43 per cent of respondents said that the woman was mainly responsible for household shopping and 54 per cent said the woman normally made the evening meal and did the cleaning.

For female breadwinners, the question is: does this balance change if you earn more money? The answer is "kind of". Researching exactly how couples divide housework when both partners are earning has proved tricky, particularly because it depends on who answers the question.

Syrda found that men were more likely to overreport their contribution to housework in general, and that women and men reported their division of household labour in relation to their earnings differently. Women who earned more tended to report their housework in a fairly linear way — as their earnings rose, they said they took on fewer chores. But men tended to report doing more housework right up until the point at which their partner earned more than them, when they reported lower amounts of housework.

Sociologists call this "gender deviance neutralisation" — if a couple breaks typical gender norms by having a female breadwinner, they sometimes aim to balance it out by sticking to more traditional gender norms in the home.

Syrda said: "I'm not saying that one is wrong and one is right. I don't know who actually does the dishes, but it's more about potential misremembering or how men want to be seen by others."

Once you add children to the mix, couples are more likely to stick to gender norms. Syrda found that as children came along, families leant more into typical gender roles, limiting a woman's capacity to be the breadwinner.

Pia Pinger, an economics professor at the University of Cologne, said: "Household decisions remain shaped by gendered expectations." She said that the evidence seen in same-sex couples and those who had adopted did not tally with the idea that the income and housework divide in mixed-sex couples simply reflected the fact that women were the ones getting pregnant, or that they did more caring because they earned less.

"Female same-sex couples tend to divide the lost income costs of parenthood evenly. In different-sex couples, by contrast, these costs fall predominantly on the woman, even when she had been the higher earner," Pinger said.

'I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DO BOTH'

Maria MacDonald took on the lion's share of the childcare even while she was the breadwinner in her family. Last year Maria, 40, was seven months pregnant with her second child when she got a job at a tech hardware firm.

She took two weeks of statutory maternity leave and went straight back to work — baby in tow. Maria said: "My husband sometimes looked after the baby, but most of the time I took him with me. I would breastfeed while on a call or have him in the sling. I actually think it made me more ballsy."

While Maria was juggling her £70,000 plus bonus job, her husband was hardly earning because he was building their hair salon, living at the construction site and managing staff.

She said: "We sat down and had an honest conversation. He said, 'I know you're seven months pregnant but realistically you are the only one who can earn.' If you strip back all the gender expectations of the world and Disney movies, then we just made the logical decisions.

"There are times when it took its toll. When he was the more stable one and supporting me and we argued he might say, 'I'm supporting you,' and I thought to myself, I would never bring that up if it was the other way round. But I did."

Maria's husband, Brett, had no issue with Maria being the breadwinner. He said: "As far as we're concerned it's all for one and one for all — those roles have just disappeared from our consciousness in some ways."

He now works long days at the salon in Spitalfields, east London, and said he would find it harder if he wasn't contributing to the family. He said: "If I wasn't doing anything then that would have a massive impact on me. That's just my sense of self more than anything. But that wouldn't necessarily need to be work, I would get that satisfaction from being a stay-at-home parent, although I probably wouldn't enjoy it as much."

ARE WOMEN MAKING IT HARD FOR THEMSELVES?

Women can also struggle to adjust to being the higher earner and giving up control over the home.

The Times columnist Vicky Reynal, a money psychotherapist, said: "I see this complexity every day in my consulting room. At the moment about half my practice involves relationships where the woman is the main breadwinner, and it is not always a man struggling to relinquish the traditional role of provider. Sometimes he is ready to let go but his partner isn't. I have worked with men who are looking for permission to step outside traditional gender roles, yet the women remain attached to the very stereotypes they might reject."

> "When the male to female earnings split is 60:40, that is when male stress is lowest
>
> **Joanna Syrda, an economist at the University of Bath**

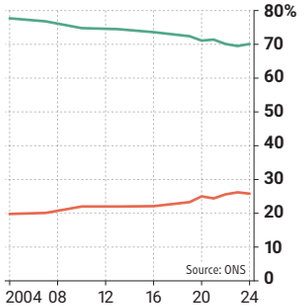
Reynal said that a woman can believe in gender equality and still feel disappointed or even "contemptuous" when her partner earns less than she does. "As a society we have done a great deal of work expanding what women are allowed to be. We have perhaps done less work expanding what men are allowed to be."

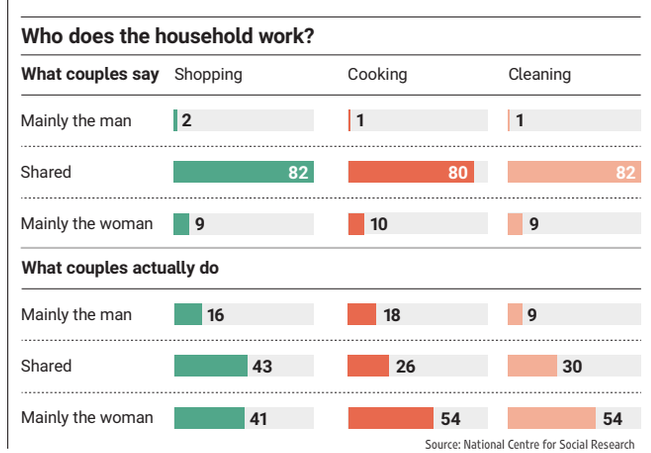
Julia Darlington's husband, Kenny, was thrown into the role of house husband when their son, Zack, was born nearly 25 years ago. After Zack needed care at Great Ormond Street Hospital, the couple decided that he could not start nursery as planned, one of them would have to stay home.

"There wasn't really a decision to be made, because we had a mortgage on a flat and we wouldn't be able to pay for it on Kenny's salary alone, so I had to keep working," said Darlington, now 61, who had just been made a director at a large fashion company.

"It was a huge transition for Kenny, to have a newborn baby with major health issues, having to navigate it all without me there. He went to a mums' group once but said he didn't know what to say — they were all talking about birthing experiences and leaky boobs."

While Darlington, who lives in Burfield near Reading and is now a coach for women, was able to keep her career and travel the world, she struggled with the transition too. "I was really resentful at times," she said. "I wanted to be the one doing playdates and picking him up from school. I wanted to be there. I can count on one hand the number of times I was able to pick him up. The guilt I carry around is huge."





Why leaving your children money won't be enough

Antonia Medlicott

I heard an interesting radio interview with a man who doesn't intend to leave an inheritance for his child. He believes that the absence of a safety net will spark more ambition in his son.

Most parents feel an innate pull to provide for their children even after they die, so it's worth asking what the research shows, and whether striving to leave an inheritance is the right goal. I think about this every time I watch my two teenagers with money.

One will talk me through compound interest problems for his A-level and in the same breath ask if he can borrow a fiver "just until Friday". They are learning about money constantly, not from anything I've sat them down and explained but from watching how I behave. The lessons that stick aren't the ones you deliver on purpose, and they matter far more than what ends up in a will.

A University of Cambridge study found that our core money habits, how we plan ahead, how we handle the gap between wanting something and being able to afford it, are largely set by the age of seven. Do I save first or spend? Do I panic about money or stay calm? Do I trust myself to manage it or assume someone else will? That's formed by watching.

Financial planners have a term for this: parental financial socialisation. A study published in the Journal of Financial Therapy by researchers at Kansas State University found that children who grew up in households under financial strain were more likely to develop problematic financial behaviour later on, regardless of how much money came their way.

> **£136k**
>
> The average inheritance expected to be passed on to those born in the 1980s

In a 2024 survey of adults in Hong Kong and Singapore 54 per cent said their parents had a strong influence on their financial habits, while 70 per cent said their parents had actively taught them how to manage money. Tellingly nearly half were consciously trying to unlearn the bad habits they had picked up, while 59 per cent said they were trying to keep the good ones.

We're in the middle of what has been called the great wealth transfer: roughly £7 trillion is expected to pass between generations over the next 30 years, while the amount paid in inheritance tax hit £8.5 billion in the 2025-26 tax year. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the UK's leading economic think tank, the median expected inheritance for those born in the 1980s is £136,000. That sounds like security, but money handed to someone who hasn't inherited the behaviours to manage it doesn't really become security at all.

I'd rather my children inherited those behaviours than a lump sum they don't know what to do with. The money helps. The habits make the money last.

Antonia Medlicott runs the personal finance site Investing Insiders

Money

Ask Times Money Lisa Caplan from the wealth manager Charles Stanley offers her advice

Should I use my pension to pay off my children's loans?

I would be interested in your views as to whether I should take 10 per cent out of my retirement savings to pay off my two children's student loans? They have just left university and the balances have not started to grow exponentially yet. The reasons against might be not having enough in retirement, or the government later considering some sort of amelioration for loan holders. I would appreciate your advice.
Name supplied

LISA CAPLAN REPLIES

Student loans are different because the interest repayments are not just related to the size of the loan — many borrowers will not be paying enough to reduce the debt, so their debt just grows and grows.

Loans are also complicated by the fact that the terms and timetables for repayment differ depending on when and where you took out the loan. You have to start repaying only once you earn over a certain threshold, but the interest starts to rack up from the minute you take the loan out. So your children have already accrued a fair chunk of interest.

When considering whether to repay your children's loans early, much depends on the income they can expect to earn in the future. Those on low incomes will repay a lower proportion of their wages and probably never pay off the loan before it is wiped out after 30 or 40 years.

Those on high incomes will repay enough to reduce and repay the loan quickly so will pay less interest overall and be more likely to clear their loan. It is the earners in the middle who will be carrying this debt for a longer time, paying a larger part of their income without making much of a dent in what they owe. The one saving grace is that student debt does not count against your credit score, meaning that it doesn't usually affect eligibility for a mortgage.

£47.7k
The average graduate debt of those who started repaying in 2025-26, according to the Student Loans Company

Parents are often shocked to realise how the loans work, and many understandably want to help their children. You are thinking about taking the money from your retirement savings — presumably pensions, which are designed to provide the income you need when you are no longer working.

You should keep your own financial position in mind at all times. It's a case of fitting your own safety belt before helping others. Some cashflow modelling based on your retirement savings may help you to understand how affordable paying off the loans would be for you — would you still have enough to fund the kind of lifestyle you want, and a decent buffer for unforeseen but expensive costs such as care fees?

You usually cannot touch pensions until you are 55, and this age is going up to 57 from April 2028. Plus the earlier you open up the piggy bank the less time there will be for your investments to compound and provide you with a higher retirement income. When it comes to Isas, withdrawals can be made at any time but the same applies — the earlier you take money out, the greater the potential damage.

Tax will probably be a factor. You can take 25 per cent of a pension tax-free. After that, any money taken is taxed as income.

There are indeed rumbles about the government considering some sort of amelioration for those with student loans. Possibly a lower and fixed interest rate and possibly reducing the age at which the debt is written off. Possibly nothing. But the debts will continue. I have seen people make decisions based on rumour and come to regret it. The new chancellor's first budget is on October 28. I suggest waiting until then.

But on a final note, I think your children are lucky to have such a generous parent.

Lisa Caplan is the director of Charles Stanley direct advice and guidance, part of Raymond James Wealth Management

How the rich flaunt their wealth in 2026

Eliza Filby

Is there anything worse than people publicly signing off on social media for the summer? The deliberate digital disconnect reads: "I have enough control over my time, my work and my relationship with technology to disappear for a while."

A public "out of office" screams social elevation for a very simple reason: uninterrupted time these days is scarce — it's the new luxury.

I've often thought that one of the great tricks of modern capitalism is convincing us to pay a premium for things previous generations took for granted. What was once ordinary has become aspirational: organic vegetables, natural fabrics, baby wraps, sold back to us as high-end products. Now the ability to switch off, concentrate or be present has been elevated to a luxury commodity.

It wasn't always like this. The great age of late-20th century mass consumption (and advertising) democratised luxury well beyond the elite. Credit cards, cheap flights and global supply chains ensured that keeping up with the Joneses could mean a Riviera holiday, sports car, handbag or watch. It was the golden age of what the American economist Thorstein Veblen, writing in the 1890s, called "conspicuous consumption": visible status through what you owned.

These days this all feels increasingly passé. Take the car. If you see a convertible, chances are the driver is in their seventies rather than their forties. The open sky has long been more enticing than the open road for younger generations. Ask the aspirational class what is scarce in their lives and few will say handbags or holidays — most will answer time, attention, silence, sleep, presence, relaxation, good health.

Paradoxically, 20th-century capitalism encouraged us to buy in; now it feels as if we're all paying a premium to log off. The marketing professor Scott Galloway puts it bluntly that "advertising is a tax that the poor and digitally illiterate pay". Member spaces and subscriptions without ads increasingly buy us freedom from the noise.

If we are living in a new gilded age, Jeff Bezos, with his Venice wedding and the Met bonanza, are the gaudy exception rather than the rule. Today's wealth whispers, not shouts, and verges on the mundane. Veblen called it conspicuous leisure — the visual freedom from productive labour. Click on Insta and you will see this in abundance.

For much of the late 20th century busyness itself signalled importance. Now status lies in demonstrating control over your time away from work and using it for cooking, parenting, exercising, or just being. Perhaps that's the real appeal of the trad wife — it is less about domesticity and traditional gender roles than a slower pace of life. Cooking from scratch holds fresh appeal if lunch is usually a hurried Pret sandwich at your desk.

The modern flex or brag is not owning expensive things but showing that you can disconnect, disappear, read a book, or, yes, announce that you are taking August off social media. Luxury used to mean caviar, now it's cottage cheese and creatine. It was thread count and marble, now its eight hours' sleep. A $600 billion sleep economy sells us the ability to nod off, which when work bleeds into evenings and LED light and endless notifications rob you of an anxiety-free wind-down, weirdly makes sense.

And that brings us to the social panic of the illiterate age. My Gen Z friends tell me that the ultimate dinner-party flex is not your latest holiday, it's what you're reading. The panic about the decline of reading has itself become a status signal. A habit once assumed to be ordinary has become a badge of distinction.

Same with our health. In a world where drinking is declining, meals are shrinking and gyms are the nightclub and the church rolled into one, there are depressing signs that we have replaced debauchery with optimisation (and with a shot of moral puritanism to boot).

The discipline once associated with saving for a house has migrated to the body. With LVMH interested in buying a stake in the fitness firm Hyrox even the luxury industry has recognised that aspiration has shifted from handbags to health.

But ultimately the new status symbols revolve around time, none more so than with parenting. Once, middle-class status was measured by raising high-achieving children with a summer diary full of the clubs, music lessons and coding camps that signalled high ambition. In the age of AI, teenage anxiety and screen fears, that increasingly looks misguided. What has replaced it? A nostalgic vision of an unhurried childhood. A big parental boast these days is: "I let my children be bored."

Boredom has become a luxury because it signals a deliberate freedom from timetables, screens and the relentless optimisation of childhood. Likewise the modern obsession with being "present". For many parents (including me), aspiration isn't climbing the career ladder so much as having a career that allows you to be genuinely there rather than permanently distracted; to attend every school assembly without being half on Zoom, to linger over breakfast, to disappear for weeks over the summer making memories with your children.

> "The modern brag is not about what you own, but how much spare time you have

But the ability to give your children an unhurried childhood increasingly depends on having an unhurried adulthood. Free time is rarely free. I have a flexible diary, I can make sports day and morning plays, but it's bought through other means: working while the house sleeps, travel and a paid crew, from PA to a cleaner.

We like to imagine all these new status symbols are the product of better choices, making you a better person. Yet often they depend on money, family and flexibility. The new luxuries may look less materialistic and more virtuous than the ones that still occupy our parents but they are often underwritten by exactly the same economics.

Eliza Filby is the author of Inheritocracy: It's Time to Talk About the Bank of Mum and Dad

‘I volunteer 12 hours to get half-price London rent’

Property guardians have access to nice areas and interesting homes — the catch is that you may have to move fast, finds **Megan Harwood-Baynes**

Amy Rogers, an artist, said that being a property guardian in a former care home gave her plenty of room to paint

As part of her rent agreement Amy Rogers has to complete 12 hours of volunteering in her local community, even though she knows that her home in southwest London is set to be demolished.

Her two-bedroom council flat in Ham, Richmond, is part of the property guardianship scheme because it is scheduled for demolition — the date of its destruction is not yet known. Property guardians look after disused or soon to be razed buildings, protecting them from squatters and vandalism in exchange for cheap or free accommodation. Rogers, 36, who works as a special needs tutor and artist, and her flatmate each pay £530 a month and £60 in bills, and she says it is “idyllic”.

“It is one of the most beautiful places,” Rogers said. “The grounds are so well maintained. There are beautiful flowers and trees. Literally everywhere you turn is beautiful.”

The rent on Rogers’s flat is 48 per cent of the £2,200 a month average for a two-bedroom home in Richmond upon Thames, according to the London Assembly. “It’s financial freedom,” she said. “I am definitely able to save more money.”

Rogers rents with Dot Dot Dot Property, which requires its guardians to spend at least 12 hours a month volunteering for a charity or good cause of their choice. The company says that since it was founded in 2011 its guardians have contributed the equivalent of £7.6 million to the voluntary sector.

Rogers helps at local projects — maintaining green spaces and running wellbeing groups. “I do a monthly meditation group, and I’m trained in doing sound baths,” she said. She won funding from the agency to run free bucket-drumming sessions at a youth centre.

CHEAP RENTS — BUT NOT AS CHEAP AS THEY USED TO BE

While Rogers’s rent is low, it is a far cry from the heyday of being a property guardian, when a similar home could be expected to cost far less. “There are signs that the cost of living crisis is beginning to bite, with higher utilities costs and property values starting to be reflected in guardianship fees,” said Chris Bevan, a professor of property law at the University of Singapore, who researched property guardianship while at Durham University in 2022.

Rent rises are unsurprising, he said, as the sector matures and professionalises, but it remains an “extremely cheap” option for those who are aware of the risks. Property guardians have significantly fewer rights than normal renters because instead of a standard tenancy agreement they typically have what is known as a licence to occupy. It means they can be evicted with 28 days’ notice. Bevan said: “While the sector is embracing stronger self-regulation, I have long been concerned that potentially vulnerable guardians could enter arrangements not fully comprehending the insecurity of their set-up.”

> “We go in knowing that it’s quite a quick turnaround, but it’s absolutely wonderful while your’e there

Rogers isn’t too worried. “We go in knowing that it’s quite a quick turnaround,” she said. “That is the reality of it, but it is absolutely wonderful while you’re there.”

With the cost of living crisis continuing, Bevan said he was not expecting the demand for cheap accommodation to disappear any time soon, but he had concerns about Dot Dot Dot’s business model.

He said: “The company’s ambitions to ‘give back’ are commendable but there will always be those who would question whether tying housing costs to volunteering is an appropriate model for occupation.”

LIFE IN AN OLD CARE HOME

Rogers is a big fan of the scheme and once lived in a former care home with 20 other guardians. There were multiple toilets and every floor had its own small living room and kitchen.

“As an artist it was amazing to be able to have that much room to paint,” she said. She lived with actors, an opera singer and teachers who were all looking for a cheaper way to afford rent in the most expensive city in the UK. “It was phenomenal, one of the most incredible places I’ve lived,” she said.

She eventually had to move out because the site was scheduled to be demolished and turned into high-rise flats — but that was almost three years ago and the building is still standing. Without property guardians it has been heavily vandalised by trespassers.

Rogers said she had no plans to return to the traditional rental market and is instead using her financial freedom to save up for another unconventional form of housing — a boat. “I don’t like to be tied to things,” she said.

The fat jab travel insurance trap to watch out for

Aaliyah Ahmed

Millions of patients taking weight-loss injections could be left without cover if they become unwell abroad and have not told their travel insurer about their medication.

Weight-loss jabs were declared in 0.06 per cent of travel cover quotes prepared by the insurer Staysure between January and May, despite an estimated 2.4 million people in the UK using GLP-1 weight-loss drugs.

Simon McCulloch from Staysure said the gap in its data suggested that some travellers did not realise their medication could be relevant to insurers. Not declaring relevant information could invalidate your policy. He said: “The safest approach is to answer every medical screening question fully and accurately when you buy a policy, then tell an insurer of any changes before you travel.”

He said that declaring a condition or medication would not automatically mean more expensive insurance but would mean insurers could assess risk and confirm what was covered.

Check your policy before you travel

Medical bills

The cost of medical treatment abroad can quickly reach thousands of pounds. Staysure’s claims data shows that between January and May medical treatment and repatriation claims made by travellers to the US came to a total of more than £371,000, while the value of claims in Spain exceeded £314,000. One claim in Spain alone cost £88,448, while a single case in India reached £128,336.

One claim that was initially estimated at about £20,600 rose above £147,500 as treatment became more complex, Staysure said

The low rate of customers declaring that they are taking weight-loss drugs may be because many do not realise that they have to disclose it. Among customers who did declare their weight-loss injections, 98 per cent had multiple medical conditions recorded on their quote.

Tase Oputu, president of the Royal College of Pharmacy, the industry body for chemists, said that travellers may not need to disclose a GLP-1 — it would depend on why it had been prescribed and the terms of their insurance policy. “Taking a GLP-1 does not automatically mean you have a condition that is relevant to travel insurance. Check directly with your insurer if you are unsure what you need to disclose.”

GLP-1 medication can be prescribed for type 2 diabetes and weight management. Side-effects can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and constipation. Oputu said these were generally mild and short-lived, although vomiting or diarrhoea could cause severe dehydration.

Concerns about the safety of weight-loss drugs are growing. The yellow card scheme run by the government’s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has had about 150,000 reports of adverse effects related to weight-loss medicines, including 15,000 classed as serious. More than 100 deaths have been reported among people who had taken the drugs. The reports made to the MHRA do not establish that the medication caused every death, but underline why insurers may want to know about a traveller’s medication and wider health circumstances.

This does not mean an insurer could automatically refuse to pay out on a medical claim because the claimant takes a weight-loss drug or is overweight. If you are asked about prescribed medication when buying or renewing travel insurance and fail to answer you could invalidate your policy if the insurer decides it would not have offered cover if it had known the relevant information.

Consumers are required to take reasonable care not to make a misrepresentation. The Association of British Insurers said: “Providing honest and accurate information about your health will help you to get the right policy, while failing to do this can cause issues at the point of claim or even invalidate your cover. If you’re not sure what you need to disclose, speak to your insurer.”

Money

Retirement Eye

Sort your files out — it could do wonders for your wealth

Those piles of paperwork may contain some treasure, says **Jessica Cook**

The biggest investment decisions most of us make aren't investment decisions at all.

We spend enormous amounts of time discussing which funds to buy, whether American shares are too expensive, or whether now is the right moment to invest at all. Yet it is surprisingly rare for the success of a financial plan to hinge on choosing the wrong global equity fund. Far more often, success comes from putting perfectly ordinary investments in the right place. Which means the first step isn't choosing a fund. It is opening a drawer that has been ignored for years.

Nobody plans to spend a Saturday sorting pension paperwork, and yet somewhere around a 50th birthday a great many of us find ourselves doing exactly that. The dining table is clear, both laptops are open, and between you sits the contents of that drawer.

Inside are statements from employers you barely remember, paperwork you cannot place and, for reasons nobody has ever established, the manual for a boiler that ceased to exist a decade ago.

Somewhere around the fourth statement you look up at the bookshelf, notice the CDs you bought through the early Nineties, and wonder briefly where the time went. Then you go back to the spreadsheet, because it is not going to fill itself in.

It isn't really the paperwork that intimidates people. It is what the paperwork represents, which is the first proper look at a financial life taken as a whole.

The Department for Work & Pensions has found that the years you turn 50 and 60 are when you are most likely to engage seriously with the idea of retirement.

This is hardly surprising because at those points retirement stops being an abstract idea.

Today's fiftysomethings also occupy an awkward place in the pensions story: final salary schemes were disappearing just as their careers got going, automatic enrolment did not arrive until 2012, and much of this generation has been left to build its own retirement wealth while keeping up with a system that never stays still.

Eventually it all comes down to one question: do I have enough saved? It is often asked with a calculator in one hand and a glass of wine in the other. It is the right question. It just isn't the final one worth asking.

Here is the number I would put beside it. From that 50th birthday there are 120 months until you are 60. Not until you retire, which for most people is now 67 at the earliest, but until the age at which you would quite like to have the choice.

That is what all of this is for. Not stopping work, but being worth enough that you could choose to stop, if you wished.

22%

The share of women aged 45 to 54 who have no private pension in their own name

THE CRUX OF IT

Which brings us to the question that actually decides the outcome. What does the next pound need to do? Is it there to reduce today's tax bill? To provide certainty over the next three years? To grow for the next 30? To help a child on to the property ladder, or to become someone else's inheritance? Only once that has been answered does it make any sense to decide how the money should be invested.

On paper every pound looks identical. Every pound carries the same face value, buys the same loaf of bread, pays the same electricity bill. Financially, though, two identical pounds can end up doing very different jobs, and the gap is far wider than most imagine.

Some pounds have a job so obvious it barely needs deciding. A pound that walks into a matched pension doubles on the way through the door, and there is nowhere else in ordinary finance where that happens. The reason it gets missed is oddly specific: attention goes to the bigger salary, while the unclaimed match is sitting on the smaller one, in the part-time job neither partner thinks of as the serious pension. If you do nothing else after reading this, put both payslips side by side and check.

Others are less obvious and considerably larger. For a higher-rate taxpayer, £500 arriving in a pension costs £300 of take-home pay, where £500 arriving in an Isa costs the full £500. Do the former every month for those 120 months and £36,000 of your own money becomes £60,000 before a penny of growth. The counterweight belongs beside it, because the relief is a deferral rather than a gift, and the money returns as taxable income later with a quarter of it tax-free. That is a calculation about your rate now against your rate then, which is precisely the sort of question the fund choice never asks you.

And some pounds are worth keeping where they are least impressive. A pound in an Isa may be doing its best work by staying reachable, because at this stage of life flexibility is often worth more than another fraction of a per cent. A pound left in cash may be doing its job perfectly by not growing at all, if its purpose is certainty at a known moment.

The difficult decision is rarely what we want the money to achieve. It is deciding which pound should do the work.Research by Legal & General and the Centre for Economics and Business Research found that almost half the parents who helped a family member on to the property ladder said it left them feeling less financially secure. Helping children is rarely the mistake, however.

The more useful question is where the money came from. Ten thousand pounds of take-home pay, routed into a pension instead, would land there as roughly £16,700 once higher-rate relief is claimed, and be worth somewhere near £27,000 by the time you are 60 if it grew at 5 per cent a year. Money is fungible, so I am not pretending pounds carry labels. But I have sat with many households who took necessary money from the most expensive place available to them and never once noticed.

The same applies across a household. Retirement planning is usually done together, and yet tax allowances belong to individuals. One partner fills every available allowance while the other's expires unused, and one pension gets every contribution while another receives almost no attention at all. Perhaps that is part of why about 22 per cent of women aged 45 to 54 still have no private pension in their own name.

EACH POUND IS DIFFERENT

Money changes jobs throughout our lives, which is why looking at wealth as one big pot is so often misleading. Different pounds have different purposes, different time horizons and different priorities. Markets will rise and fall, and governments seem incapable of leaving pensions alone for long enough for anyone to get comfortable. None of that is within our control. Whether each pound is doing the job it is best suited to entirely is.

For most families, long-term financial success depends less on finding extraordinary investments than on making ordinary decisions well. Every pound carries the same face value. The difference is that some spend a lifetime working harder than others. That is why not all pounds are equal.

Jessica Cook is a partner in a financial planning firm

The little-known rule that could wipe out your pension savings

Smarter with Money

Steve Webb

Have you ever wondered what happens to your workplace pension when you change job? Well, the good news these days is that your money isn't lost or frozen.

Most who have been automatically enrolled into a workplace pension will be part of a big scheme with millions of members. Even when you change job, your pension will still be overseen by trustees whose job it is to look after your money. They go on doing this until you want to access your pension, either for a transfer to another scheme or because you are ready to draw it in later life.

But things haven't always been this simple. And, as a reader of my regular column for This is Money found out, in some cases changing job can lead to you losing your pension altogether.

Before 2015, if you had worked somewhere for less than two years, your scheme could implement what was known as a "short service refund" to avoid the cost of looking after a small pot. This meant that unless you took action the pension scheme would wipe out your pot, refunding your contributions and giving the employer back its share.

When I was pensions minister from 2010 to 2015 I took the view that this rule should be scrapped because it was causing money to flow out of pensions when what we really needed was more money to flow in. But for employees who started work before 2015, the old rules applied. Before your pension was closed down, you had to be told about the plan. Your scheme had to give you the option to transfer your pot, which was a way of protecting what you had built up, including the money your employer had paid in. But if you took no action, it could close the pension down.

The person who got in touch with me had moved house not long after they changed job and didn't get the letters from the pension scheme. They included an initial letter telling them that they would need to transfer out if they wanted to protect their pot, and a final reminder letter before the pension was closed.

Worse was to come. Their pension had been run under a salary sacrifice arrangement, where the worker agrees a pay cut in return for the employer making all the pension contributions. This reduces both parties' national insurance bill. However, because technically there are no employee contributions, when a short service refund occurs all the contributions are refunded to the employer. The employee loses everything. In this case we were talking about thousands of pounds.

This all happened more than a decade ago and it's hard to put things right now. Not only has the pension been closed, but the scheme is now part of a different arrangement. Technically, everything was done correctly. The scheme administrator wrote to the address that they had for the member, and didn't get anything back to suggest that the member didn't live there. They sent a follow-up letter and only acted when they once again got no response.

Ideally the member would have notified the scheme of their new address. But that's not always the first thing you think about when you move house. I also wonder if the administrator could have tried using a credit reference agency to see if the member was showing up at a new address, although this would certainly have been going above and beyond what they would normally do.

There's a lesson for all of us here in making sure that every firm we have a pension with has our proper address. And for those who had short-term employment that started before 2015, it may be worth checking that you really do still have that pension you thought you had built up.

Steve Webb is a partner at the consultancy LCP and was pensions minister in the coalition government

Your Money Matters Holly Thomas

Mum paid Sky £1,200 for TV she's never been able to watch

Our consumer champion gets to grips with your problems

My mother is 98 and lives on the west coast of Scotland. I am her only son and I live north of London. She is cognitively sound but recently went into hospital and I was up and down visiting. It was during this time that I found she was paying more than £50 a month for Sky TV but all she had was Freeview. A friend of hers mentioned that this had been going on for about three years.

The problem was that her viewing card would not pair with her TV box — she is not good at coping with change or technical things. I tried to fix it in Scotland but because she could not remember her password Sky would not resolve the problem or speak to me. I made numerous calls — too many to list. On one I suggested that I would stop the direct debit because she was paying for a service she was not getting, but I was told that this would be a breach of contract and debt collectors would be called in. I decided against going down that route — she was quite ill and I did not want to add to her stress. But I did say going after a 98-year-old in hospital was pretty extreme.

When my mother got out of hospital we rang Sky together. It accepted that the service had not been working and arranged for a new viewing card. That was more than two weeks ago and no card has arrived. The response from Sky has been disappointing to say the least. In truth it should refund her three years of payment, but at the least it could restore her service or cancel the contract.
John, Hertfordshire

HOLLY THOMAS WRITES

Your mother is now home from hospital and comfortable. But despite your best efforts she is still paying £52.50 a month for a Sky Q TV service she is not getting.

The call you had with one customer services agent sounded unhelpful to say the least — you were told about the repercussions of stopping payments, rather than them working to resolve the matter.

Luckily once I intervened Sky saw sense and agreed to refund payments going back to July 2023, when the contract was taken out. Your mother has received £1,270.50 and an engineer is due to visit shortly to restore a proper service.

Sky admitted that it fell short of the experience you should expect and acknowledged how frustrating it would have been to be told about debt collectors, given that the issue with the card hadn't been identified.

You said: "The speed of response since you got involved is just so fantastic. I will be there for the engineer visit — my mother finds these things difficult. It wasn't really about the money, just getting it resolved so that either she got the service or we stopped paying. We will donate half of the refunded money, split between Prostate Cancer UK and the Trussell Trust."

£1,639,976

– what Your Money Matters has saved readers this year

Sky said: "We're sorry for the issues experienced and recognise how frustrating this has been for our customer."

If you are paying for a streaming service you should be benefiting from the full range of services listed in the contract. If this is not the case, gather as much evidence as possible to prove you don't get the service you have paid for and complain to the company as soon as possible. As this case has illustrated, it can be pot luck as to whether you get to speak with someone who will take your concerns seriously. If you do not feel as if you are being heard, ask to speak with a supervisor or manager and (politely) make a bit of a fuss.

If a complaint doesn't provide a satisfactory result after eight weeks you can escalate it to the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme or the Financial Ombudsman Service — both are free to use.

If you have a money issue
write to yourmoneymatters@thetimes.co.uk

Our daughter's £50k Bonds vanished

My wife has managed Premium Bonds and a Junior Isa with National Savings & Investments (NS&I) for my daughter since she was one. She turned 16 in June, and NS&I wrote to say she could take over her own account.

We completed the form and a witnessed signature two weeks before her birthday, but it wrote back to say she could not yet take control of the account because she hadn't turned 16. We had to do the form again, and wrote to NS&I to complain about the unpragmatic way it had dealt with this, but our views were dismissed.

When we finally registered our daughter's online access, she could see only her Isa, not the Premium Bonds. We called NS&I, but after a long discussion the agent said he could not speak to the relevant department because it was 5.01 pm and they had gone home. We emailed, but instead of a fix, a complaint was registered.

I experienced this two years ago when my son turned 16. It was a long, bruising experience sorting it out. NS&I assured us that lessons would be learnt.

With NS&I you can't walk into a branch or email, so I am having to spend a fortune on registered post that is not answered. It is not a great first financial experience for a 16-year-old, who is worried that her savings have disappeared.
AK, Bedford

HOLLY THOMAS WRITES

Premium Bonds can be held in the name of children but are managed by a parent or guardian until the holder turns 16. NS&I contacts the child a month before their 16th birthday to explain how they can register for access to their accounts.

After your forms were accepted, at the second attempt, your daughter's dashboard showed no Premium Bonds. She has the maximum holding of £50,000, so you were all understandably concerned. She had also won £100 in July's prize draw, according to an email alert, so you were keen to make sure that was credited. Because she has built up the maximum stake, winnings cannot be reinvested, so are normally paid by bank transfer to your wife.

Having had a poor experience some years ago with your son, it was rotten luck that things didn't go smoothly for your daughter either.

While I waited for NS&I to review your complaint you had another letter explaining that your daughter's signature didn't match the one on its records. You sent another signature.

Once NS&I investigated it told me that the Premium Bonds hadn't shown up because the address held on the system against did not match the one on your form. You had moved in 2012 but your new address was applied only to your adult accounts — your daughter's Junior Isa was not affected as it was opened after you moved.

You said you had spoken to NS&I advisers in 2024, 2025 and this year and had been reassured that the address was up to date.

NS&I has now linked the accounts so your daughter can view them online. Her win from the July draw of £100 turned up too — a cheque had been sent to your old address, and you had to go to collect it. NS&I offered to pay your daughter £100. It said: "We apologise for the inconvenience caused and will be making a payment in recognition of this."

You said: "If I was not afraid of being plunged into an NS&I rabbit hole I would withdraw all our family's investments."

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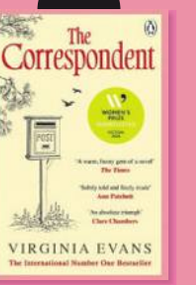
£9.99


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Money

Unit trust and open-ended investment company prices

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS				
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573				
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	130.16	...	-0.27	8.06
UK Equity A ‡	399.87	...	-2.67	3.95
UK Growth ‡	10447.51	...	+2.68	2.21
ARTEMIS FUND MGRS				
0800 092 2051				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	385.39	...	+4.41	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	216.72	...	+2.48	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	229.40	...	+1.85	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	67.18	...	-0.87	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	808.38	...	-12.29	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	309.84	...	-4.71	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.22	...	+0.60	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	901.28	...	-2.97	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	703.41	...	+12.51	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4292.79	...	-2.22	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	94.99	...	+0.77	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.64	...	+0.21	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.73	...	+0.10	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	116.43	...	+0.21	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.60	...	+0.10	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1350.44	...	-3.80	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2364.02	...	-5.57	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1114.56	...	-0.01	...
AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT				
Dlng: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511				
Health ‡	3387.00	...	+62.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2138.00	...	-41.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	332.90	...	+2.70	0.37
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	236.60	...	-4.50	1.10
AXA FUND MANAGERS				
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808				
UK/Global Investment Companies				
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.10	...	...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.30	...	...	1.51
CIS UNIT MANAGERS				
08457 46 46 46				
European Growth ‡	299.00	...	-1.40	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1034.00	...	-11.00	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	878.40	...	-11.50	1.69
UK Income ‡@	258.30	...	-2.80	3.83
CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT				
Dealing 020 7426 6232				
Winchester ‡	5731.83	...	+68.51	0.60
COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS				
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083				
Share Class 1-Retail				
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1622.00	...	-8.00	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	595.70	...	-7.30	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	406.60	...	+1.90	...
Strategic Bd ‡	229.10	...	+0.60	3.90
EDENTREE INV MGMT				
0800 358 3010				
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡	499.50	...	+0.60	1.85
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	465.80	...	+3.30	0.53
Sust Mgd Income ‡	141.90	...	-1.10	4.01
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	85.25	...	-0.07	4.97
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡	256.20	...	-3.30	1.74
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	329.80	...	-1.70	1.46
FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL				
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181				
Amer Spec ‡	2946.00	...	-12.00	...
American ‡	8154.00	...	+106.00	...
Euro Opps ‡	746.00	...	-4.60	0.48
European ‡	4463.00	...	-14.00	0.76
Global Focus ‡	3745.00	...	+18.00	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.40	...	+0.03	6.37
Global Special Sits ‡	9030.00	...	+48.00	...
Japan ‡	1011.00	...	+25.50	0.33
Moneybldr Bal ‡	48.63	...	-0.63	0.61
Moneybldr Inc ‡	28.24	...	-0.05	5.02
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡	201.57	...	-3.44	2.49
Special Sits ‡	7554.00	...	+1.00	1.64
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	106.60	...	-1.00	1.42
HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS				
01296 386 386				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Share Class C				
Corporate Bond ‡	37.38	...	-0.04	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	217.40	...	+0.80	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	108.10	...	-1.40	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	120.40	...	-1.20	...
HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)				
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6				
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)				
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1648.00	...	+10.00	0.76
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1870.00	...	-12.00	2.27
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1084.00	...	-7.00	2.32
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	439.30	...	-6.20	2.51
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	178.30	...	-2.50	2.66
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	413.60	...	+1.40	2.84
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	224.30	...	+0.20	2.83
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1108.00	...	-13.00	2.66
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	498.40	...	-5.90	2.80
Japan Ind Acc ‡	240.50	...	+4.40	1.41
Japan Ind Inc ‡	174.60	...	+3.40	1.44
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1083.00	...	+44.00	1.53
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	612.90	...	+25.30	1.55
HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class				
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	312.20	...	-0.10	4.20
Income Acc ‡	1062.00	...	...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	398.50	...	-6.00	3.34
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.40	...	...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.90	...	...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	224.00	...	-2.70	3.00
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	86.81	...	-1.07	3.07
HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)				
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1269.00	...	+7.00	0.75
INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD				
Dlng:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677				
Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121				
Invesco Funds				
Corp Bond ‡	231.74	...	-0.35	4.07
High Income Dis ‡	432.56	...	-4.85	3.15
Income & Growth Dis ‡	506.95	...	-4.09	3.09
Income Inc ‡	1669.80	...	-16.71	2.85
Money Acc ‡	107.89	...	+0.08	3.64
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.36	...	-0.07	5.73
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1396.49	...	-14.95	1.47
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1374.89	...	-4.21	1.20
INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD				
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900				
OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv				
American A Acc ‡	885.11	...	+8.08	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	471.59	...	-0.80	2.61
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	270.23	...	+0.02	2.48
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	333.69	...	+2.94	0.20
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	122.81	...	+1.08	0.94
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	376.24	...	-0.01	3.78
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.86	...	...	5.19
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡	104.52	...	-0.05	5.96
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	66.95	...	-0.02	7.66
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡	293.61	...	+2.84	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1244.74	...	+20.21	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	304.27	...	-0.57	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	406.95	...	-1.13	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2125.77	...	+1.35	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	556.87	...	+11.77	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	540.17	...	+5.29	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	414.40	...	+4.06	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2792.15	...	+31.81	1.01
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	960.24	...	+10.93	1.02
For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)				
JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS				
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646				
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	113.80	...	-0.10	4.50
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	100.20	...	+2.91	5.60
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	357.00	...	-2.40	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	153.50	...	-1.10	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1300.00	...	-34.00	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	305.00	...	+7.60	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3251.00	...	-30.00	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	93.25	...	+0.06	5.90
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6677.00	...	+71.00	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	88.84	...	-0.28	2.30
Global Tech A Acc ‡	7202.00	...	+100.00	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	178.61	...	-2.14	2.10
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	187.70	...	+0.50	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	339.90	...	+1.20	1.80
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	163.70	...	+0.60	2.80
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	234.40	...	+0.80	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	229.90	...	-0.30	4.30
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.54	...	-0.06	4.20
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.76	...	+0.20	5.70
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	206.80	...	+0.10	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	201.20	...	-1.40	1.20
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	3071.00	...	+36.00	...
J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT				
OEIC				
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	708.70	...	-7.70	2.53
JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD				
020 7581 3020				
Distribution & Growth ‡	125.71	...	-0.20	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	606.38	...	-1.23	0.71
European ‡	4036.02	...	-8.12	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1369.98	...	+4.85	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	427.34	...	-1.00	3.87
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	350.11	...	+2.55	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	844.05	...	+6.12	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	474.60	...	+0.13	3.40
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	614.96	...	-0.42	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	294.73	...	-4.45	1.75
UK Growth ‡	285.09	...	-3.07	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1020.58	...	-15.85	4.58
LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD				
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956				
Euro Ind Acc ‡	818.20	...	-5.20	1.90
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	488.60	...	-3.10	1.90
Fixed Int Acc ‡	150.40	...	-0.10	4.60
Fixed Int Dist ‡	62.17	...	-0.05	4.60
Global Health ‡	123.30	...	-0.10	0.90
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	241.40	...	+3.00	...
High Inc Acc ‡	154.60	...	+0.50	5.70
Japan Ind Acc ‡	115.40	...	+2.20	1.20
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	426.60	...	+17.50	1.30
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	537.80	...	-6.50	2.50
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	232.80	...	-2.80	2.50
US Ind Acc ‡	1436.00	...	+8.00	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	474.10	...	+0.40	0.90
M&G SECURITIES				
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196				
Authorised Inv Funds				
Charifund Inc ‡	1899.36	...	-19.26	5.13
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2				
Extra Income Inc ‡	825.15	...	-9.04	5.11
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	67.04	...	-0.14	4.39
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.29	...	+0.13	6.24
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	101.81	...	+0.33	1.56
Index Trckr Inc ‡	104.47	...	-1.26	3.01
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.36	...	+0.01	4.25
UK Select A Inc ‡	3317.18	...	-16.47	2.64
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3				
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.81	...	-0.06	5.02
Dividend Inc ‡	66.42	...	-0.93	5.38
Recovery A Inc ‡	141.83	...	-1.68	2.86
Sml Cos Inc ‡	364.54	...	-2.73	2.81
Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4				
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	161.88	...	-0.40	3.79
MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST				
0808 005 5555				
High Income ‡	87.23	...	+0.03	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	297.60	...	+0.10	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	719.10	...	-2.30	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	323.50	...	-1.10	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	483.50	...	-0.40	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1106.00	...	-1.00	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1348.00	...	+7.00	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	750.20	...	+3.70	0.20
MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT				
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962				
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)				
Class A Shares				
Equity				
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40	...	...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65	...	...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69	...	...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53	...	...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.88	...	...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.28	...	...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12	...	...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45	...	...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1108.42	...	-2.65	4.31
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1746.11	...	-4.27	4.27
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1171.78	...	-2.87	4.39
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14261.24	...	-8.38	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1652.01	...	+7.89	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1760.87	...	+8.38	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3835.81	...	-2.25	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1561.27	...	+13.90	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1521.48	...	+4.83	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1563.56	...	+4.92	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1555.83	...	+13.82	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1580.09	...	+5.02	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.63	...	-0.13	4.88
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.06	...	-0.09	4.90
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1381.02	...	-1.23	4.73
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3059.35	...	-2.72	4.73
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2503.94	...	+60.18	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1507.33	...	+45.45	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2636.33	...	+63.21	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1560.64	...	+47.04	...
SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS				
08457 413002				
Equity Inc Inc ‡	242.80	...	-3.00	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.80	...	...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	652.70	...	-8.60	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	313.40	...	-4.10	...
SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD				
0141 248 6100				
Far Eastern Inc	617.07	649.47	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1388.66	1465.60	+38.41	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.49	1508.70	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.23	593.38	...	7.81
SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS				
0845 300 2244				
Overseas Growth Investment Funds				
Tracker & Special Investment Funds				
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	602.80	...	-6.30	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	274.30	...	-2.90	2.50
UK & Income Investment Funds				
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	329.40	...	...	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	108.00	...	...	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	474.50	...	+2.50	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	299.00	...	+0.80	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.46	...	+0.19	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	560.50	...	-1.60	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	151.70	...	-0.40	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	229.00	...	+0.10	4.50
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.28	...	+0.05	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	136.00	...	-0.50	2.50
OEIC B Class				
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	667.80	...	-7.00	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	272.80	...	-2.80	2.60
OEIC C Class				
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	132.80	...	-0.40	2.60
STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS				
0845 279 3003				
Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares				
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.55	...	-0.04	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.15	...	-0.03	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.70	...	...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	296.70	...	+1.30	...
Gb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	203.50	...	+1.00	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	268.20	...	+1.40	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	186.10	...	+0.30	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	48.17	...	+0.09	...
Managed Acc ‡	527.20	...	-2.00	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	259.10	...	-0.60	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	823.90	...	-3.80	...
SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS				
Enquiries:0141 222 1151				
Balanced A Acc ‡	187.75	...	+0.67	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	158.90	...	+0.58	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	133.73	...	+0.27	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	105.77	...	+0.22	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	502.88	...	+2.86	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	439.98	...	+2.50	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	496.23	...	+2.34	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	320.80	...	+0.79	2.17
THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS				
Client Serv: 0800 0684000				
Retail Shares Class 1				
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.42	...	-0.10	4.86
Threadneedle Monthly Etr Inc ‡	101.65	...	-1.29	2.69
Threadneedle StrdlngCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.94	...	-0.05	4.29
Threadneedle StrdlngCorp Acc ‡	54.94	...	-0.05	3.98
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.60	...	-0.05	4.59
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.87	...	-0.11	3.85
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	119.56	...	-2.31	3.59
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡	112.70	...	-1.94	3.19
Threadneedle UK Ins1 Rtl ‡	249.68	...	-2.78	1.30
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	89.82	...	-1.59	3.00
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	167.75	...	-1.37	1.39
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	488.11	...	+0.85	0.39
For Resolution see Ignis				
TU FUND MANAGERS LTD				
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis	1016.00	1016.00	-5.00	1.21

This list contains unit trusts and Oeics widely held by private investors. The weekly price change is based on a Friday-to-Thursday trading period.* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); ‡ Ex dividend; ‡ Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

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Best buys

Data supplied by defaqto Smarter financial decisions

Savings

Easy access (without introductory bonus)

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
cahoot	via website	Simple Saver	£1	4.52%
Oxbury	via website	Easy Access Summer Account	£1,000	4.33%
thisbank	via website	Triple Access Savings	£1,000	4.28%
Charter Savings Bank	via website	Easy Access	£1	4.21%
Kent Reliance	via website	Limited Access Saver	£1	4.21%

Long-term fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Market Harborough BS	via website	Fixed Term Bond (5 Year)	£5,000	5.00%
The Family BS	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Bond	£10,000	4.99%
GB Bank	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Bond	£1,000	4.98%
Afin Bank	via app	5 Year Fixed Term Account	£1,000	4.96%
Leek BS	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Bond	£1,000	4.85%

Easy-access cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Hargreaves Lansdown	via website	Shawbrook Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.52%
Atom Bank	via app	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.25%
Kent Reliance	via branch	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1,000	4.24%
Charter Savings Bank	via website	Easy Access Cash Isa	£1	4.23%
Cynergy Bank	via website	Online Isa	£1	4.15%

Fixed cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Meteor Savings	via website/app	IsBank 1-Year Deposit Isa	£1,000	4.80%
TSB	via website	18 Month Fixed Rate Isa	£1	4.45%
Vida Savings	via website	2 Year Fixed Rate Isa	£1,000	4.77%
Vida Savings	via website	3 Year Fixed Rate Isa	£1,000	4.80%
Leek BS	via website	5 Year Fixed Rate Cash Isa	£1,000	4.85%

Lifetime cash Isas

Provider	Contact	Account	Min	AER
Moneybox	via app	Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	4.25%
Plum	via app	Lifetime Isa	£1	4.20%
Tembo	via app	Barclays - Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	4.00%
Paragon	via website	Cash Lifetime Isa	£1	3.51%
Bath BS	via website/app	Lifetime Isa	£1	2.60%

Regular savings accounts

Provider	Contact	Account	Min Mntly	AER
Santander	via website/app	Regular Saver CV	£1	8.00%
Bank of Scotland	via website	Monthly Saver F	£25	8.00%
Halifax	via website/app	Regular Saver CV	£25	8.00%
Lloyds Bank	via website/app	Club Lloyds Monthly Saver CF	£25	8.00%
Lloyds Bank	via website	Monthly Saver F	£25	8.00%

Pension annuities

Single life

Provider	Contact	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Standard Life	0808 164 0164	£6,879.56	£7,508.19	£8,167.94
Canada Life	0345 606 0708	£6,949.45	£7,558.95	£8,115.16
Legal & General	0808 304 9447	£6,728.40	£7,393.32	£8,090.52
Scottish Widows	0345 757 3494	£6,794.33	£7,555.13	£8,286.48
Aviva	0800 051 4094	£6,849.55	£7,369.60	£8,106.68

Joint life

Provider	Contact	Couple: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Standard Life	0808 164 0164	£6,589.16	£7,123.23	£7,674.84
Canada Life	0345 606 0708	£6,707.79	£7,207.01	£7,808.84
Legal & General	0808 304 9447	£6,486.96	£6,809.76	£7,508.28
Scottish Widows	0345 757 3494	£6,570.05	£7,137.01	£7,823.24
Aviva	0800 051 4094	£6,684.06	£6,781.62	£7,368.89

Based on a £100k pension pot. **Data supplied by Kellands, a chartered financial planner**

Mortgages

First-time buyer mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Redmptn charge until
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.99% V	for 2 years	95%	£0	None
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.89% V	for 2 years	95%	£999	None
West Bromwich BS	0800 298 0008	5.20% F	to 31.10.29	95%	£499	To 31.10.29
Earl Shilton	01455 844 422	5.19% D	for 5 years	95%	£125	1st 5 yrs
West Bromwich BS	0800 298 0008	5.29% F	to 31.10.31	95%	£0	To 31.10.31

2-year fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.60%	for 5 years	60%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.77%	for 5 years	75%	£490	P
NatWest	0800 096 9527	4.85%	to 30.11.31	80%	£0	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.83%	for 5 years	85%	£490	P
NatWest	0800 096 9527	4.82%	to 30.11.31	90%	£995	P

5-year fixed rates

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.60%	for 5 years	60%	£490	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.77%	for 5 years	75%	£490	P
NatWest	0800 096 9527	4.85%	to 30.11.31	80%	£0	P
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.83%	for 5 years	85%	£490	P
NatWest	0800 096 9527	4.82%	to 30.11.31	90%	£995	P

Long-term fixed-rate mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
Santander	0800 555 100	5.01%	to 02.11.36	60%	£999	R
Santander	0800 555 100	5.06%	to 02.11.36	75%	£999	R
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	5.49%	for 10 years	80%	£999	P
Santander	0800 555 100	5.49%	to 02.11.36	85%	£999	P
Santander	0800 555 100	5.59%	to 02.11.36	90%	£999	P

Discounted variable-rate mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
Santander	0800 555 100	4.03% V	for 2 years	60%	£999	P
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.17% V	for 2 years	75%	£999	P&R
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.17% V	for 2 years	80%	£999	P
Nationwide BS	0333 060 03 25	4.29% V	for 2 years	85%	£999	P&R
First Direct	0800 48 24 48	4.65% V	for term	90%	£490	P&R

Buy-to-let mortgages

Provider	Contact	Initial Rate	Period	Max LTV	Fee	Purchase or remortgage
The Mortgage Works	0345 607 3021	4.34% V	to 30.09.28	75%	£1,495	P&R
Barclays	0333 202 7580	4.52% V	for 2 years	75%	£899	P
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.48% F	to 31.10.31	75%	£3,999	P
HSBC	0800 494 999	4.73% F	to 31.10.31	75%	£1,999	P
Barclays	0333 202 7580	4.85% F	to 30.09.31	75%	£999	R

The selections above are based on a combination of initial rate, fee and incentive available.

National Savings & investments

	Notice or Term	Min	AER	Interest Paid
Accounts and bonds				
Guaranteed Growth Bond	5 Yr Bnd	£500	4.75% F	Maturity
Direct Saver	None	£1	3.45%	Yearly
Income Bond	None	£500	3.45%	Monthly
Tax-free products				
Junior Isa	Age 18	£1	3.70%	Yearly
Direct Isa	None	£1	3.80%	Yearly

Personal loans

Fixed monthly repayment on £10,000 for 5 years

Provider	Contact	Rep APR	Amount per month	Total repaid
M&S Bank	via website	5.9%	£192.15	£11,529.00
TSB	via website	6.1%	£193.03	£11,581.80
AA	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00
Santander	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00
Tesco Bank	via website	6.4%	£194.35	£11,661.00

Borrowing rates and availability of products are subject to individual credit ratings.

Credit cards

Introductory rate for balance transfers

Provider	Contact	Product name	Bal trans Transfer	Bal trans fee	Purch APR
TSB	0345 8353846	Platinum BT	0% 1st 38 mths	3.49%	24.95%
HSBC	03455 873 444	Balance Transfer	0% 1st 36 mths	3.09%	24.90%
NatWest	03457 888 444	Longer BT	0% 1st 36 mths	3.10%	24.90%
Virgin Money	0800 011 3210	Balance Transfer	0% 1st 36 mths	3.10%	24.90%
Barclaycard	0800 151 0900	Platinum BT	0% 1st 36 mths	3.15%	24.90%

Introductory rate for purchases

Provider	Contact	Product name	Introductory Term	Purch APR
M&S Bank	0800 997 996	Purchase Plus	0% 1st 26 mths	24.90%
TSB	0345 835 3846	Platinum Purchase	0% 1st 26 mths	24.95%
Lloyds Bank	0345 603 7239	0% Purchase and BT	0% 1st 25 mths	24.94%
Barclaycard	0800 151 0900	Platinum BT	0% 1st 24 mths	24.90%
HSBC	03455 873 444	Purchase Plus	0% 1st 24 mths	24.90%

Cashback credit card

Provider	Contact	Product name	Purchase APR	Cashback
American Express	0800 917 8047	Cashback Everyday	29.1% Intro	0.50% - 1.00% standard 5%/5mth (max £125)
Santander	0800 085 1759	Rewards	24.90%	0.25% Standard 3%/12 months P
Lloyds Bank	0345 603 7239	Ultra	14.94% Intro	0.25% Standard 1%/12 months
Virgin Money	0800 011 3210	Everyday Cashback	24.90% Intro	0.25% Standard 1%/3mth (max £15 a mth)
Natwest	03457 888 444	Travel Reward	27.90%	0.1% - 1.00% standard T on spend over £1 a year

Borrowing rates are subject to credit ratings. Terms apply to all cashback. T = Eligible travel spend for higher cashback; P = Eligible travel and eating out spend for higher cashback

Current accounts

Credit interest

Provider	Contact	Account name	Account Fee	AER
Nationwide BS	0800 30 20 10	FlexDirect	None	5.00% AE
Bank of Scotland	0345 721 3141	Vantage Classic	None	3.00% B
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds	None E	3.00% B
Bank of Scotland	0345 721 3141	Vantage Silver	£11.50pm	3.00% B
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds Silver	£11.50pm E	3.00% B

Authorised overdrafts

Provider	Contact	Account name	Account Fee	0% O/D EAR	0% O/D fee
Starling	0207 930 4450	Current Account	None	15.0%	£0
First Direct	0345 600 2424	1st Account	None	39.9%	£250
Virgin Money	0800 678 3654	M Plus Account	None	19.9%	£0
Virgin Money	0800 678 3654	Club M Account	£14 pm	19.9%	£0
Lloyds Bank	0345 300 0000	Club Lloyds	None E	29.9%	£100

Current account interest rates paid up to a specified level, terms may apply to qualify for rates shown. A = Introductory rate. B = Certain balance needed for high interest. C = Existing customer. D = Discounted variable rate. E = Terms apply. F = Fixed rate. L = Limited Access. V = Variable rate. All savings rates are AER variable unless stated. Methods of opening and operating accounts vary. All rates and terms subject to change. No liability accepted for any loss arising from use of this information. Readers who are not financial professionals should seek expert advice. Rates correct at 11am August, 13 2026

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Money

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities are based on closing prices. Investment trust high and low prices are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
86¾	33½	Aston Martin Lag	34⅞	– ¼	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**‡	245⅞	+ 2	5.9	11.4
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0⅝		...	-3.4
4006	2624	**Admiral**	3932	+ 38	3.6	16.0
662½	414½	AJ Bell	618	+ 6	2.4	24.1
28761½	22372½	AON Corp‡	26338	+ 278⅞	0.9	...
1130	765	Arbuthnot♦	830	+ 40	6.6	7.6
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	228	+ 2⅝	7.4	18.7
2126½	1535½	Australia & NZ	2035¾	+ 46	5.6	20.0
727¾	590⅝	**Aviva**	726½	+ 13	5.5	27.0
1122	689	Banco Santander	1100	+ 6	1.5	14.1
554¼	352⅞	**Barclays**‡	520½	+ 1½	2.2	11.9
17¼	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4¼		...	-2.2
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	676		5.4	5.1
363⅞	212	Bridgepoint Grp	340⅜	+ 3	2.8	68.1
352	264½	Chesnara	335½	+ 2½	6.7	-66.4
492	349	City of London Grp	484	+ 4	6.8	16.4
556½	318½	Close Bros	428	+ 8	...	-6.4
753	203	CMC Markets‡	702	+ 3	2.0	25.5
2957¼	2057	Deutsche Bank	2844¼	+ 1½	3.0	10.5

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
93	73½	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	73¾	– ¼	0.9	...
240½	136	EPE Special Opps♦	209	– 2	...	8.6
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2215	Georgia Capital	4485	+ 50	...	2.8
57	43¼	Hansard Global	53	+ ¾	8.4	40.8
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223½		4.5	7.7
1904	1257½	**Hiscox**‡	1795	+ 10	2.2	13.5
1610	928½	**HSBC**‡	1527¾	+ 2	3.6	17.1
1956	1016	**IG Group**‡	1363	+ 31	3.1	9.4
204	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	114¾	– 2	8.7	7.2
2340	1424½	**ICG**	2060	+ 14	4.2	12.4
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship‡	139⅝	– ⅝	6.3	-9.9
690	499½	**Investec**	674½	– 5	5.7	8.7
76	60	Investment Co	76¼		...	...
75	48	IP Group	69¼	– 1½	1.8	9.6
24	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	7¾		45.2	2.4
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	162¾	+ ¾	3.7	8.5
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	597	+ 5½	2.8	6.7
318½	217¼	**Legal & General**	305	+ 5¾	7.2	30.5
13620	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	13510	+ 130	2.4	9.5
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	316	+ 1	6.0	20.5
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	37½	+ 1⅜	8.3	16.9
117½	77½	**Lloyds Banking**‡	115¼	– ⅛	3.5	16.5
22	14	LMS Capital	15½		25.9	...

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
10140	6684	**London Stock Exchange**‡	8536	– 20	1.9	35.8
367½	247	**M&G**	355¾	+ 2½	5.8	28.2
327¼	154½	Man Group‡	314	+ ⅝	4.0	27.6
39¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦‡	24½	+ ½	2.1	4.5
10	1¾	Marechale Capital♦	5¼	– ½	...	-16.6
185⅝	98¼	Metro Bank	180¼	+ 1	...	23.1
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2165½	– ⅜	4.1	18.7
726	500⅛	**NatWest Group**‡	707¾	+ 2¼	4.9	13.2
833¾	438⅛	PayPoint	608½	+ 5	6.5	10.3
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1025	+ 7½	1.9	9.0
1¼	0⅜	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅜		...	-1.9
209	150¼	Quilter	198¼	– ¼	3.2	22.3
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1710	+ 8	5.8	15.8
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	320½		...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1985		5.8	10.2
3	0⅛	Sancus Lending♦	1⅛		...	7.2
59⅛	42¼	Schroder REIT	45¾	– ⅜	7.9	...
599½	358⅛	**Schroders**‡	583	– 1	3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place**‡	1180	– 13	1.5	11.8
2278	1285	**Standard Chart'd**‡	2219	– 4	2.3	15.4
948½	615	**Standard Life**	927	+ 6½	6.0	-196.8

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	415		2.7	39.9
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	156		5.0	8.9
383¾	271⅛	Breedon	352¾	– 3	4.3	14.6
451⅛	318⅛	**British Land**	437⅞	+ ⅜	5.3	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅛	Derwent London	2096	+ 8	3.9	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4¾		...	-2.7
19½	11	First Property♦	13	+ ½	1.9	7.2
75	29	Fletcher King♦	42½		5.3	28.7
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	36⅞	– ¼	3.2	8.6
637	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	625	– 1	3.2	18.5
391½	241	Genuit Group	283¾	+ ¾	4.5	15.6
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	275	– 3	4.0	10.1
1062¼	788½	Grafton Grp Units	1048	+ 8	3.6	14.9
208½	149½	Grainger	176¼	– ¾	4.8	6.4
377	270	Great Portland Est	360⅝		2.3	0.0
391¾	263⅞	Hammerson	381¼	– 3¼	4.8	...
183	116¼	Harworth Group	179¾	– 1¾	1.0	61.9
400	215½	Heath (Samuel)♦	245		5.3	30.6
236¼	180⅛	Helical	205	– 1	1.3	42.4
147⅜	87⅛	Ibstock	89½	– 1½	2.2	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	132¾	+ ¾	6.7	13.7
3518	1238	Keller‡	3108	– 10	2.6	15.4

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
12	6¼	SIG	8½		...	-1.6
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	130¾	– 1¾	...	17.9
113	86⅛	Sirius Real Estate	96½	– ⅝	5.7	7.5
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23⅛	16	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.7
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	86	– ¾	4.8	30.7
140	104	Town Centre	129½		3.9	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	278	+ 1⅜	...	6.6
434⅛	312	Workspace Group	366	– 4	7.1	...
930	730	Wynnstay Props♦	915		3.1	12.7

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
229	110½	AEP Plantations	182	+ 2	3.3	10.7
30	17⅛	Airea♦	26½		3.8	10.4
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2052	– 13	3.1	14.5
715⅝	589	Barr (AG)	604	+ 5	3.1	14.3
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**‡	4214	– 50	5.8	12.0
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1079½	– 18½	...	...
181¼	85⅞	C&C Group	96⅝	– ½	5.1	...
5⅞	2¼	Capital Metals♦	3⅞	– ¼	...	-33.0
460	271	Churchill China♦	395	+ 10	5.3	9.9
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4606	– 52	2.2	20.8
1515⅛	821	Coltefax♦	1450		0.4	10.3
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5260	+ 30	2.1	17.8
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1764	+ 12	2.1	30.6
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1716	+ 28	3.5	10.6
151½	114½	Fevara	140½	+ 2	1.7	6.1
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**	19110	+ 30	3.0	30.6
2185⅛	1136½	Glanbia	1983¼	– 33¼	1.9	36.7
307½	191½	Greencore	264⅝	+ ¾	1.0	20.0
79¼	4¾	Headlam	9¾	– ½	...	-0.1
861	447⅞	Hilton Food	615½	+ 2½	5.7	7.0
3632	2592	**Imperial Brands**	2609	– 34	6.4	10.4
7646⅛	5567¼	Kerry Group	7077½	– 84	1.7	20.7
170	106¼	McBride	162⅝	+ ¾	1.8	8.3
226	85	Mulberry Group♦	220	+ 9	...	-16.9
1275	880	Nichols♦‡	1110	+ 35	3.5	18.9
374	252	Norcros	326	+ 1	3.5	...
381⅜	309	Origin Ents♦	367		4.0	8.7
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅜	Portmeirion♦	50½		...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1⅜	+ ⅛	...	-58.2
114	65½	PZ Cussons	104¼	– 1⅝	3.6	22.2
138	92	REA	107	– 1½	...	-207.1
210	155	Tandem♦	190		1.6	12.3
330	220	The Character Grp♦	315		2.2	-46.7
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	7¼	+ ¾	...	-16.9
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever**‡	4589½	– 39	3.6	12.4
84	19½	Victoria♦	55¾	– 2½	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1948	+ 32	1.0	75.6
1527	902⅝	**Babcock**‡	1193½	+ 12	0.6	28.3
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2258	+ 22	1.7	32.8
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1200		1.4	6.4
2295	1376	Braime Group♦	2350		0.7	12.5
550	350	Caffyns	400		2.5	-9.8
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.6
340	202¼	Castings‡	310	+ 2	5.9	17.9

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
27	12½	Checkit♦	21		...	-8.1
650½	446½	Chemring Group‡	628	+ 8	1.3	35.3
55	28½	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34½		...	-38.3
1538	881½	Cohort♦	1434	+ 82	1.2	27.5
534⅛	184	Dialight	520	+ 4	...	...
15	5½	Feedback♦	6¼		...	-0.2
1270	463½	Gooch & Housego♦	1210	– 10	1.1	88.3
28500	9040	Goodwin	19580	– 180	1.4	59.8
4902	3194	**Halma**‡	3686	– 58	0.7	37.4
3220	1994	Hill & Smith	2930		...	28.5
2¼	1	Image Scan♦	2⅛		...	-12.4
3166	2216	**IMI**‡	3072	– 16	1.1	24.7
7000	3480	Judges Sci.♦	4000	– 95	2.9	48.4
90	34	LPA♦	82½		...	-31.2
685	409½	**Melrose**‡	494¼	+ 2¼	1.5	17.0
261	179½	Morgan Advanced	250	– 1½	4.9	33.3
405	200	Mpac♦	330		...	-10.4
1800	1120	MS Intl♦	1590		1.6	23.6
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2916	– 34	0.8	34.5
2413⅛	1779½	Phillips Elec	2025	+ 5½	3.6	-47.4
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	2⅛		...	-3.0
5490	2930	Renishaw	5175	– 65	1.5	44.9
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce**‡	1541	+ 16	0.7	22.2
489⅛	286½	Rotork‡	484⅜	+ ⅝	1.7	35.1
105	60	SDI Group♦	89½		...	19.0
318½	161	Senior	293	+ 1	0.7	-287.3
2039½	2021½	SKF Group	2031½		3.0	30.4
2754½	2088	**Smiths**	2613	+ 1	1.8	30.5
215	135	Solid State♦	182½	+ 2½	1.5	25.3
249	170	Somero Enter♦	230	– 5	3.3	16.4
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	7020	– 115	2.4	31.7
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	4½		...	-4.4
320	240	Thorpe FW♦	257	– 1	2.8	11.8
142¾	47	Transense Tech♦	47½		...	5.1
507½	350	Vesuvius	395¾	– 2	6.0	18.7
710	325	Volex‡	554	– 6	0.9	21.3
3580	2254	**Weir**	2662		1.6	27.8
2060	843	XP Power	1742	+ 8	...	-41.5

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281	– ½	1.0	60.8
12⅜	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5¼		...	-6.2
8	0½	CellBxHealth♦	1⅜		...	-0.2
580	387½	Anpario♦	525	+ 15	2.4	13.1
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**‡	11460	– 248	2.1	23.5
3⅝	1⅜	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1⅞		...	2.7
259¼	193	**Convatec**	229½	– 2¼	2.4	36.2
34	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	23½		2.3	7.7
116⅜	72	Eco Animal Health♦	101	– 1½	...	31.0
32	21⅜	EKF Diagnostics♦	25¼		...	53.8
10½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅜		...	-0.1
3228½	1943	Genus	2256	+ 2	1.5	77.0
2282	1288½	**GSK**‡	1817½	– 39	3.9	12.9
0⅜	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.0
416½	274½	**Haleon**‡	355⅛	– 2¼	2.1	19.1
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma‡	1640	– 3	3.9	12.2
266	150½	Hutchmed China♦	185	– 5	...	4.7
19⅜	1½	ImmuPharma♦	4⅜	+ ¼	...	-11.9
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½		...	-15.9
15	6½	IXICO♦	7½		...	-4.1

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2785	+ 5	3.0	5.2
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	383	– 1	3.5	12.0
1758	1408½	Aberforth Smlr‡	1752	+ 14	2.7	27.4
1394	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1387	– 3	2.1	75.0
404	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	394½	– 4½	3.9	31.9
220	116½	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235½	AVI Global	264½	+ ½	1.7	52.2
194	154½	AVI Japan	171		1.3	58.2
331	266	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	306	– 1½	0.8	...
133	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	122½	– 2	0.6	...
1090	811½	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1068	– 4	0.9	...
175¾	123	Baillie Gifford SN	172¼	– ⅝	0.4	...
231	180½	Baillie Gifford UK Gr‡	224	+ 3	2.8	36.0
154¾	121½	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	153	– 1⅜	1.8	68.0
445	387½	BH Macro GBP	426	+ ½	...	20.1
1762	832	Biotech Growth	1698	– 30	...	-393.7
289½	197	BlckRck Amer Inc‡	285	– ½	5.2	...
205	120½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	179½	– 4	3.2	51.3
208	164½	BlckRck Fro Inv	191½	– ½	4.0	25.6
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	617	– 1	1.2	89.6
240	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	234		3.3	32.4
288⅞	230½	BlckRck Smlr‡	280	– ½	2.8	32.0
1072⅞	543½	BlckRck Wld Min	950	– 14	2.5	39.5
1665	1275	Brown Adv US Sm	1640	+ 2½	...	-273.8
1584	1336	Brunner‡	1568	– 2	1.7	56.3
402	312	Caledonia Inv	396½	– ½	1.9	51.5
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	591	+ 1	3.7	27.4
155⅞	86	Crystal Amber Fd	88	– ½	-63.8	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Opd	500		5.6	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	356	– 4½	3.7	29.3
120	92	CT UK HIT B	109	– 2	5.5	22.5
126	97	CT UK HIT	119½	+ 1½	5.0	24.6
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent♦	475		...	...
861	737½	Edinburgh IT	850	+ 2	3.8	32.0
294½	186½	Edin Wwide	260	– 2½	...	-234.2
1332	325½	**F&C Inv Trust**	344½	– ⅜	1.2	76.7
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	610		3.4	27.1
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	263	+ ½	3.4	28.5
1574	836	FdltyEmrgMkt	1478	+ 4	1.3	64.6
447½	367½	Fidelity European Trust	442	– 2	2.2	39.1
477½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	474	+ ½	2.2	38.6
915	706½	Fins Gwth & Inc	818	+ 8	2.5	43.3
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure‡	82		8.5	38.1
370	316	Global Opps Tst	336	– 1	3.1	43.1
105	100	Golden Prospect‡	104¼		-15.6	...
68⅞	57⅜	Greencoat Renew	66⅜	– ⅛	-16.7	...
117	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind‡	111	+ ½	9.6	-12.7
344	250	Hansa Investment Co‡	342	+ 6	1.3	77.7
332	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	332	+ 4	1.3	75.5
3500	2725	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3500	+ 25	...	-59.3
214	173¼	Hend High Inc	207	– 1	5.4	18.4
998	769	Hend Smlr	990	+ 2	2.9	37.9
3290⅝	2285	Herald Inv Trust	3070	+ 10	...	...
518	318½	HgCapital Trust	427	+ 19	1.2	...

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
141	107½	HICL Infra	138¾	+ 1	6.1	10.1
1611½	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr‡	1490	+ 28	2.8	-119.7
494½	379	Impax Env Mkts	445	+ ½	1.1	90.1
519	368½	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	490½	– 2	3.9	49.9
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc‡	170½	– ½	7.2	13.0
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc	415		3.9	82.8
1258	1041	JPM American	1248	– 6	0.9	...
652	395	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	586		5.3	...
313	255	JPM China‡	273	– 1	5.0	70.2
986	788	JPM Claverhs‡	974	+ 4	3.7	28.9
310	181½	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	242	– 7	0.2	...
181¼	118½	JPM Em Mkts‡	164¾	– 1¾	4.6	71.7
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	635	+ 5	2.5	34.9
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	206	– 1	2.9	36.2
641	529½	JPM GG&I	633	– 1	3.9	76.5
1098	799	JPM India‡	873	– 5	5.1	...
867	661	JPM Japan	858		1.0	84.5
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	455	– 1	0.7	...
1290	977½	Law Debenture	1260	– 2	2.9	33.8
191	145½	Lowland Inv	188		3.6	27.9
137½	137½	Marwyn Val Inv‡	138½		15.3	...
289	234½	Mercantile IT	288	+ ½	2.9	31.1
687	536	Merchants Trust‡	677		4.4	22.1
804	682	Mid Wynd	788	– 2	1.1	...
1664	1366	Monks Inv Trust‡	1632	– 8	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml‡	177½		0.9	91.5
1036	854½	Murray Income Trust‡	1004		4.1	26.0
372½	290	Murray Intl‡	369	– 1	3.5	26.5
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	427	+ 1	...	76.2
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	406½	+ 2½	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**‡	3938	+ 70	1.4	3.8
558	508	Personal Assets	551		1.0	91.4
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	675	– 10	...	-808.6
80½	63¼	Renewables Infra‡	75¾	+ ½	10.0	-14.0
2645	1932	RIT Cap Ptnr	2625		1.7	...
990½	490	Riverstone	593	+ 11	...	-370.2
738	488¼	Schroder TotRt	708	– 2	1.6	72.2
892	603	Schrd Asia Pac	837	– 5	1.6	63.4
378½	311⅞	Schrod Inc Gwth	370	– 3	4.0	29.5
401	275	Schrod Jap Gwth	394	– 3	3.1	57.0
782	652	Schrod UKMid	778	+ 5	2.9	31.1
17⅜	12¼	Schroder UK PP Tr	17	– ¼	...	-70.8
572	480½	Scot American‡	559	– 2	2.9	35.7
1563	1015½	**Scot Mortgage**	1435½	– 14	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	85⅞	+ ⅝	8.0	12.6
253	215½	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	229		3.7	35.3
352	196½	Temp Emg Mkt	320	– 1	1.6	59.4
429½	334	Temple Bar	425	+ ½	3.7	30.8
198½	162½	The Glbl Smaller‡	197¼	+ 1	1.6	66.8
9	0⅝	Potentially AI	6⅜		-1.6	...
364½	291	TR Property	311	– 1	5.2	19.7
202	194	UIL	192½		19.0	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	281	+ 1	3.4	20.7
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	712	– 14	...	4.6
398	310½	Ww Health	380½	– 11	0.6	...

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12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
6347¼	4254⅞	Sun Life Canada	5999¼	+ 14	3.4	...
6¼	2¼	Tavistock Invs♦	3		3.4	2.5
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp‡	4932	+ 90	5.2	6.9
1¾	0⅛	Tern♦	1⅜		...	-1.6
60	40⅜	Time Finance♦	52½		...	8.3
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0¼		...	-1.8
4	1½	Truetide♦	3¼		...	-5.8
132	77⅛	Vanquis Banking Gp	79¾	+ 1¼	...	25.0
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2020	– 40	...	10.7
7239¼	5453⅛	Wells Fargo‡	6511¼	– 11½	2.3	...
2275¾	1781⅜	Westpac Bkg Corp	1851½	– 15¾	4.4	17.6
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28⅞		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	53920¼	+ 133¼	5.1	18.5

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
370	181	Alumasc♦	225	+ 5	4.9	8.7
6⅛	4⅜	Aseana Properties	4¾		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1⅝		...	-165.0
973	549	Balfour Beatty	915½	– 7	1.6	17.4
410¼	235⅛	**Barratt Redrow**	326¼	– 2¼	5.2	24.0
2890	1715	Bellway	2182	– 18	3.3	16.4
4442	2796	Berkeley	3622	– 24	...	10.9
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	906	+ 2½	5.2	...

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
8795⅝	8594¼	Kingspan Group	8622½		0.6	27.3
726	522½	**Land Securities**	712½	+ 3½	5.8	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**	194		6.4	...
25⅛	4¼	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6¼		...	-0.4
198⅛	124	Marshalls	170¼	– ⅜	4.1	29.9
106	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	78		5.9	19.4
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.2
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4576	+ 40	3.6	12.3
10200	8350	Mountview Estates‡	8800		6.0	16.9
85	65¼	NewRiver REIT	82	– ⅜	8.2	...
234	160	Palace Capital	183		8.2	40.7
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1187	– 8½	5.1	13.3
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props‡	95¾	+ ¾	7.6	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	30¾	– ¼	4.9	-61.4
849½	578¾	Safestore	630½	+ 5½	4.9	...
1142	791½	Savills	1090	+ 2	2.2	21.0
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro**‡	960¾	– 6¾	3.3	...
155⅛	124½	Shaftesbury Capital	150¾	+ ½	2.9	8.1

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1	0⅛	Thalia Therapeutics◆	0⅛		...	-4.0
77¼	53⅛	NIOX Group◆	67½	+ 1½	2.3	40.0
131.50	96.03	Novartis	CHF122.44	- 1.30	3.0	39.9
962	423½	Oxford Biomedica	487	- ½	...	-18.1
0¾	0⅛	Physiomics◆	0½		...	-2.6
4⅞	1¼	Proteome Sciences◆	1¾		...	-1.7
6522¼	3664	**Reckitt Benck**‡	5114	- 26	4.2	10.9
28⅞	10⅜	RUA Life Sci◆	26½		...	-113.7
29	9½	Sareum Holdings◆	26½	+ 1	...	-11.0
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1096	- 9½	2.7	20.6
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	234	+ 3	0.6	57.1
14	5	Talisman Metals◆	6¼		...	1.8
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx◆	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech◆	70¾	- ¼	...	30.9
4780½	3665½	BASF	4344	+ 58½	4.4	27.9
4606¾	2268½	Bayer	4092½	- 16¼	0.2	-13.0
98⅛	73⅛	Coats Group	84½	- ⅛	2.9	19.3
3352	2437	**Croda**	3258	- 27	3.4	73.4
460	230	Cropper (James)◆	445		...	14.4
195⅛	136	Elementis‡	182⅜	+ ¾	1.8	-31.7
110	6⅛	Hardide◆	84	- 2	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper‡	3000	- 45	4.6	-7.5
2434	1731⅜	Johnson Matthey	2196	+ 6	3.5	-38.4
1083	660	Mondi	882	+ 1⅜	1.4	27.6
169⅞	110	Robinson◆	132½		4.5	9.7
997¼	597	Swire Pacific	956½	- 23½	3.9	46.9
12	5½	Symphony Enviro◆	8		...	-7.4
124	16¾	Synthomer	101¼	+ 1⅜	...	-1.1
2858¼	2026⅜	Takeda Pharma	2603⅛	+ 18⅛	3.6	-58.0
831	515	Victrex	808	- 4	7.4	25.2
430	320	Wynnstay◆	372½	+ 2½	4.8	37.7
479¼	318½	Zotefoams	445½	+ 7	1.8	9.6

Leisure

451	231	Accesso Tech◆	299½		...	14.5
260	160	Celtic◆	203		...	5.7
221⅛	164	Domino's Pizza‡	197⅜	+ ⅝	5.8	13.1
915¾	500⅜	**Entain**	557¼	+ 11⅜	3.6	-5.3
65½	19¾	Evoke	46¼	+ ¼	...	-0.4
52	29	Gaming Realms◆	30¼	- 1¼	...	15.1
310	210	Heavitree◆	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A◆	225		2.9	4.2
175.70	115.64	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$158.85	-	0.40	12.2
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	283½	+ ½	...	9.5
297	129⅜	On The Beach	197⅜	+ 4¼	2.0	35.9
151¼	86	Rank Group	105⅜	- ⅜	3.3	16.5
219¾	137¼	SSP	212	- 2⅜	2.1	-22.8
0⅝	0⅛	Bow Street Group◆	0⅛		...	-0.3
840	530½	Wetherspoon JD	816	- 8½	1.5	13.6
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2480	- 25	3.9	20.1

Media

76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms◆	64½		4.1	51.2
29	18	Altitude Group◆	24		...	-96.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group◆	79½		5.0	11.3
831¼	418⅝	**Autotrader**	539⅝	+ 13¼	2.1	15.8
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	664	+ 17	2.4	20.0
3½		Caledonian Hldgs◆	1¼		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media◆	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai◆	0⅛		...	-3.0
21	9	Ebiquity◆	9⅜		...	-0.9
785½	262¼	Future	337⅜	+ 7	5.0	5.4
154	60⅛	GlobalData	83⅜	+ 1½	1.8	19.0
110	44	IG Design Group◆	94		1.1	-0.8
1000	719	**Informa**‡	925¾	+ 4¼	2.4	...
87⅜	65¼	ITV	71½	- ½	7.0	12.1
215½	98⅛	ME Group	118¾	+ ⅜	7.1	7.9
0¼	0⅛	Mediazest◆	0⅛		...	14.7
27	12	Mission Group◆	21	+ 3	...	-1.0
220¼	139⅛	Mony Group‡	208¼	+ 4¼	6.1	13.6
2341⅞	1624⅛	News Corp A	2143⅜	+ 16⅜	0.7	...
2606⅞	1891½	News Corp B	2444½	+ 18⅜	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group◆	341½	+ 3½	4.5	-11.4
1337	874¼	**Pearson**‡	1197	+ 4½	2.1	23.3
4½	3	Primorus Inv◆	3⅜		...	5.0
75¾	40⅛	Reach‡	42¾		13.8	-1.0
59	40	React◆	41		...	-28.3
3634	1991	**Relx**‡	2526	+ 35	2.7	22.4
783¾	391⅜	Rightmove	511	+ 20	2.1	18.2
270	130	SpaceandPeople◆	136		...	6.3
130	95⅛	STV Group	108	+ ½	...	-10.0
452½	170½	System1 Group◆	325		1.8	31.2
5113¼	4956	21st Cent Fox A	5113¼		0.8	...
3350¾	3299⅜	21st Cent Fox B	3350¾		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	278	+ 8	4.2	21.6
412⅝	218½	WPP	399	+ 2¼	3.8	7.9
71½	40	Zinc Media◆	57½		...	-5.6

Natural Resources

0⅛	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power◆	11		...	-4.5
89⅜	36¼	Afentra◆	71	- 2¼	...	-68.7
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals◆	0		...	-1.0
0¼	0⅛	Allen Metals◆	0⅛		...	-15.0
2⅞	1	Aminex	1¼	+ ⅛	...	-14.7
8924	3349⅜	Anglo Amer Plat	6483¾	+ 23½	7.0	24.2
4239	2115	**Anglo Amer**	3850	- 65	0.7	-15.8
435	155	Anglo Asian Mng◆‡	407½	- 7½	0.7	35.6
4475	2077	**Antofagasta**	3585	- 171	1.6	36.0
1¼	0⅛	Arc Minerals◆	0⅛		...	-1.3
2¾	1¼	Ariana Resources◆	1½		...	-155.0
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources◆	0¾		...	-11.0
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources◆	1½		...	-13.1
1094	481½	Atalaya Mine	917	- 4½	1.1	17.6
4¼	2½	Beacon Energy◆	2⅞	+ ⅛	...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining◆	10	- ½	...	-3.0
0¼	0	Bezant Resources◆	0¼		...	12.1
3495	1918	BHP Group	3206	- 60	3.2	24.4
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet◆	10½	- ⅛	...	-88.5
122½	8⅛	Bougainville	9⅛	- ¼	...	-13.7
609¾	399⅛	**BP**‡	522⅞	+ ½	4.7	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy◆	0		...	-0.7
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals◆	4¾	+ ⅜	...	-8.8
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.3
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining◆	1705	+ 30	2.4	8.2
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals◆	145¼	- ¼	8.3	-4.6
2¼	1½	Chariot Ltd◆	1½		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy◆	0		...	-6.2
0½	0¼	Corcel◆	0⅜		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics◆	10¾		...	-2.1
300½	108⅝	DRD Gold	180¾	+ 1⅞	2.3	15.2
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals◆	0¼		...	-3.1
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy◆	0		...	-0.4
5620	2410	**Endeavour**	4111	+ 2	3.2	19.9
28	9⅛	EnQuest	24⅝	+ ½	3.3	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining◆	2¼		...	15.3
2⅛	0⅛	Europa Oil & Gas◆	1⅜		...	-9.5
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo‡	28⅝		...	-4.6
4472	1617	**Fresnillo**‡	2880	+ 7	3.9	20.8
80	3	Galantas Gold◆	24		...	-6.5
12½	2⅜	GCM Resources◆	3⅞	+ ½	...	-5.6
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	3⅜	- ⅜	...	-0.1
3½	1⅝	Getech◆	3¼		...	-7.7
707¼	281⅞	**Glencore**	548⅞	- 12	2.3	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration◆	0⅛		...	-4.5
4582¾	2310⅛	Gold Fields	2961⅛	+ 20⅜	3.9	...
21	6½	Goldplat◆	18		2.9	30.0
2	0⅛	Goldstone Res◆	0⅝		...	-0.8
800	237½	Greatland Resources◆	643½		...	19.3
353¾	176	Griffin Mining◆	271	- 18	...	30.3
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone	179¾	+ 3¼	7.1	35.0
858	246½	Hochschild	509½	+ ½	0.9	17.7
553	294	Hunting	488	+ 6	2.0	25.2
0⅛	0	Ironveld◆	0		...	-2.2
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power◆	109¼	- 2½	...	-14.8
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals◆	2¾		...	-3.7
1⅛	0⅛	Karel Diamond Res◆	0⅛		...	-3.9
2⅛	0⅛	KEFI Gold and Copper◆	1¼		...	-11.0
345	178⅛	Kenmare Res	201	+ ½	...	-0.7
5⅞	1⅜	Landore Res◆	1¾		...	-1.8
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources◆	0⅛		...	-1.6
4⅞	2⅛	Lexington Gold◆	2¼	+ ⅛	...	-28.7
19¼	10⅛	Metals Exploration◆	14		...	18.0
0⅛	0⅛	Nativo Resources◆	0⅛		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4		...	-0.0
0⅝	0⅛	Oriole Resources◆	0⅜		...	-16.0
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	11½	Orosur Mining◆	17⅜	+ ½	...	...
190⅜	59¼	Pan African Res	108⅝	+ 1⅜	2.0	20.5
33¼	6½	Pantheon Res◆	13¾	- ⅜	...	-48.0
27	12½	Parkmead Group◆	20½		...	3.1
22½	5⅛	Petra Diamonds	6	- ⅛	...	-0.2
1¾	0½	Petrel Resources◆	0⅞		...	-4.0
1⅜	0⅝	Petro Matad◆	1		...	-4.6
8½	2½	Plexus Holdings◆	3⅝		...	-1.4
938	672	Porvair‡	878	- 2	0.8	22.3
5½	2½	Prospex Energy◆	3½		...	-5.2
5	0⅞	Quadrise◆	1¼		...	-6.4
160	35	Reabold Resources◆	62½		...	-78.2
0	0	Red Rock Res◆	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5324½	Rio Tinto Ltd‡	8772½	- 277¾	3.9	16.7
9117	4436½	**Rio Tinto**‡	7059	- 107	4.9	15.6
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources◆	0⅝		...	-15.4
375	184¼	Serabi Gold◆	300		1.7	5.7
302⅜	146	Serica Energy◆	247¾	+ 8⅛	6.5	-25.8
3758½	2553½	**Shell**‡	3320	+ 32	4.6	14.8
7	2½	Shuka Minerals◆	3		...	-2.2
13	1½	Sound Energy◆	1⅜		...	-1.6
27	5½	Star Energy◆	23	+ 1	...	-4.1
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy◆	2⅜	- ⅛	...	-2.4
0	0	Sunrise Resources◆	0		...	-3.0
0		Synergia Energy◆	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals◆	0⅛		...	-6.5
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy◆	0½		...	-0.5
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6477½	+ 33	4.6	12.7
0	0	Tower Resources◆	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	14¾	+ ¼	...	50.0
0	0	UK Oil & Gas◆	0		...	-0.2
13	2½	URU Metals◆	4		...	-2.7
0⅝	0⅛	Vast Resources#	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy◆	3¼		...	-8.3
1½	0½	Xtract Resources◆	1¼		...	-5.4
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy◆	3¼		...	-7.2

Professional & Support Services

5135	2980	4imprint‡	4716	- 68	3.8	15.8
615	464	Andrews Sykes◆	597½		4.3	13.8
130	103½	BTG Consulting◆	107		4.3	20.2
2886	1981	**Bunzl**	2758	+ 12	2.7	19.6
416	215	Capita	273	+ 2	...	-1.9
49⅜	25	CEPS◆	40		...	-11.4
165	90	Christie Group◆	152½		2.3	30.0
2581½	2000	**Compass**	2366¼	- 41	2.1	29.1
87	64½	Croma Security◆	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6360	- 10	3.4	...
35	15	Diales Grp◆	34		4.4	26.2
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7370	+ 5	0.9	53.4
840	505	DiscoverIE	809	- 4	1.6	26.8
115¼	78½	Essentra	106¼	- 1¼	2.0	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2890	+ 79	1.8	23.8
330	110	FIH Group◆	145		4.7	-3.5
850	588	Hargreaves Servs◆	810		4.9	8.7
5855	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5840		2.8	26.8
250½	163½	Int'l Workplace	178¼	- 4¼	0.6	...
172½	123⅛	Johnson Service	147¼	- ⅛	3.3	15.8
554	360	Journeo◆	505	+ 2	...	20.8
262½	178⅛	Kier Group	261¾	+ 1⅝	3.0	20.5
1170	910	Latham (J)◆‡	1040	- 30	3.5	11.2
3800	2100	London Security◆	3650		2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	268	+ 11	4.3	16.1
99	59½	Macfarlane	72½	+ 2¼	5.1	18.1
189⅜	64½	Maintel Holdings◆	68½		...	-5.8
28	15¼	Malvern Int'l◆	20½	- 1	...	-2.7
460	310	Mears Group	431	- 4	4.2	7.7
268⅝	101⅛	Michael Page	205⅞	+ 10¾	2.3	70.8
214	134½	Mitie Group‡	208		2.2	31.5
15¼	0½	MobilityOne#	6¼		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security◆	110		...	15.6
260	170	Norman Broadbent◆	187½		...	5.9
158	84½	Northern Bear◆	130½	- 1	5.7	4.3
187½	110	NWF Group◆	150½	- ½	5.8	8.1
66	42	PCI-PAL◆	62	+ ½	...	...
12½	7	Petards◆	9¼		...	-14.6
12⅞	7	PHSC◆	7¾		...	-2.6
0¼	0½	PowerHouse Energy◆	0¼		...	-3.1
64	41½	Record	44½	+ ¾	8.2	11.2
978	772	Renew Holdings◆	926	+ 3	2.2	15.0
507	329¼	**Rentokil**‡	351½	- ¼	2.7	25.5
310	222	Restore◆	299½	- 1½	2.4	-63.7
7	1½	River Global A◆‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	14	Roebuck Food Group◆	26		...	-9.0
752½	536⅛	RS Group	737½	+ 8	3.1	21.3
150	85	RTC Group◆	90		7.5	6.4
122⅞	68	RWS Holdings◆	120¼	+ 2⅜	5.3	-4.5
612	520	Science Group◆	577	+ 3	1.7	7.7
325¼	212½	Serco	268½	- 4¾	1.7	18.7
79⅜	54	Smiths News	70		7.9	6.0
29	13¼	Software Circel◆	16½	+ ¼	...	-78.6
52½	36⅛	Staffline Group◆	44½	+ 1⅛	...	11.3
300½	132¼	SThree	290½	+ 5½	4.9	21.2
350	146	Synectics◆	200		2.5	9.1
2	0½	Thruvision Group◆	1⅜	+ ⅛	...	-1.3
74	46	Tribal◆	62	- 1¾	2.1	14.8
82½	58	Vianet◆	66½		3.6	46.5
490	294½	ZIGUP	477½	- ½	5.7	14.2

Retailing

117⅜	82½	AO World	96½	- ½	...	15.1
269¼	140	B&M European	233½	- 2¼	4.1	14.3
115¼	58¼	Card Factory	75¼	- ⅛	6.6	8.4
1648	1062	CVS Group	1307	+ 8	0.7	17.7
204	113	DFS Furniture	160	+ 1	0.6	15.2
1248	707	Dunelm	891½	+ 13	7.9	11.5
840	598	Frasers Group	814½	- 3	...	9.4
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1822	- 24	3.8	15.2
250	123¾	Halfords‡	237½	+ 4	3.8	15.6
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	827	+ 4½	2.7	16.8
895	640½	Inchcape‡	825½	+ 6½	4.1	11.4
1⅞	0⅝	Imaging Biometrics	0⅝		...	-4.1
106½	64	**JD Sports**	92⅜	- 1	1.3	10.7
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	326⅞	- ¾	3.8	23.4
418⅜	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	383½	- 7¼	1.1	30.2
3⅛	0⅝	Mothercare◆	0⅝	- ⅛	...	-0.8
93¼	61¼	Naked Wines◆	71⅜	- ⅝	...	-7.8
15900	11200	**Next**	15255	- 70	1.8	20.1
376	140½	Ocado	244½	- 13¼	...	5.2
241⅝	167¼	Pets at Home	215	+ 1¾	3.4	15.6
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	430½	- 3½	...	89.7
747	183⅜	Saga	691	+ 10	...	...
380½	292¼	**Sainsbury's**	343⅝	- 1¼	4.0	19.9
1120	378⅝	WH Smith	429½	- 5¾	...	-3.9
14	4½	Sosandar◆	12¾		...	91.1
510⅜	411⅛	**Tesco**	461½	+ ¾	3.1	16.8
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	35½		8.7	11.6

Technology

252	140⅝	Alfa Financial	166½	+ 4	5.8	16.3
307	195	Aptitude Software	219	+ 7	2.5	30.0
129	55	Bango◆	62½		...	-8.6
20	12	BATM Adv Coms	12⅜		...	-4.0
33	19⅜	Berkeley Res	25½	+ ½	...	-66.7
3½	1¼	Blackbird◆	1⅜	- ⅛	...	-2.3
194	74	Celebrus Tech◆‡	101	- 1½	3.4	-113.1
28	12½	Cirata◆	13¾		...	-3.1
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo◆	0⅛		...	0.4
5090	2234	**Computacenter**	5010	+ 72	1.5	34.2
286	173½	Concurrent Tech◆	250		0.5	42.7
13½	6½	Corero◆	7¾	+ 1	...	-103.0
2644	988	Craneware◆	1284	- 16	2.6	31.0
110	50	Crimson Tide◆	87½		...	20.8
9⅞	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs◆	9⅞		...	-8.5
15½	8	Dillistone Group◆	12		...	-8.2
0½	0	Forgent◆	0		...	-0.0
165¼	94½	FDM Group	114¾	+ 2⅜	6.1	22.0
480	114	Filtronic◆	256	- 13	...	...
265	156⅜	GB Group	160¾	- 71⅜	2.7	-5.2
51	24	Ilika◆	24½	+ ¼	...	-6.1
138	56	Ingenta◆	67½		6.7	5.6
178	73	Intercede◆	116½	+ 1½	...	20.4
28½	11¾	Iomart◆	14¾	+ ½	...	-1.8
72⅞	4¾	IQE◆	46½	- 3½	...	-12.3
4453½	912⅜	LG Electronics	1454	- 41¼	1.7	...
79	37	MTI Wireless◆	66½	+ 2½	3.1	15.4
14¼	2	Nanoco Group	2½		...	-2.2
138	94⅛	Netcall◆	119	+ 1	0.8	48.6
36	22	Northamber◆	24½		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics◆	40¾	- ¼	8.0	-74.0
31	17	Pennant Int'l◆	29	+ ½	...	-5.8
447	210	Playtech	382½	+ 12⅛	...	0.9
50	30¼	Pulsar Group◆	31		...	-4.0
576½	398½	QinetiQ‡	563	+ 3	2.0	28.0
117	88	RM	102	- 3	...	39.2
6½	2¾	Seeing Machines◆	4¾	- ¼	...	-11.3
66	35½	Shearwater Group◆	57½	- 2	...	-1.4
2060	1083	Softcat	2052	+ 44	1.5	30.8
50	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	575½	Tele Ericsson	757¼	- 8¼	3.1	11.4
1181	771⅜	**The Sage Grp**	1060½	+ 45½	2.1	28.1
90	52½	Touchstar◆	82½		3.9	-6.2
435	280	Tracsis◆	335	+ 7½	0.8	...
430	230	Triad Group‡	410	- 10	2.2	41.3
340	210	Water Intel◆	340	+ 22	...	16.1
150	96⅜	Xaar	120	+ 3	...	-27.9
17	8½	Zoo Digital◆	14¼		...	-5.1

Telecoms

436¼	211¾	**Airtel Africa**	329¼	+ 3	1.6	24.0
242⅛	173	**BT Group**‡	200¼	+ 3¼	4.2	18.2
169½	106	Currys	160¼	+ ¼	1.9	10.3
1186	687	Gamma Comms	975½	+ 6½	2.3	14.0
247⅝	121¾	Helios Towers‡	204¾	- 2⅛	0.9	75.0
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media◆	0⅛		...	-2.9
1916	638	Telecom Plus‡	855	+ 7	5.8	8.4
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	121½	+ 1⅜	3.3	-86.2

Transport

260	203⅜	Braemar‡	220	- 5	3.2	30.4
5485	3365	Clarkson	4986	- 24	2.3	23.3
683¼	332⅜	EasyJet	671	- 2	2.0	10.2
233	152⅛	FirstGroup	184½	+ ¾	3.9	8.6
554	320	Fisher (James)	463	+ 3	...	-53.2
492⅝	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	443½	+ 1	1.5	7.3
695	458	Irish Cont	685	- 10	2.0	17.2
36	17	Mobico Group	25¾	- ¼	...	-1.1
7	1¾	Sutton Harbour◆	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1080		...	...

Utilities

220¼	151½	**Centrica**	156	+ 1	3.6	-104.0
937½	613⅜	Drax Group	720	- 5	4.2	34.8
485	420	Jersey Electricity	435		5.0	12.1
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1193½	- 7	4.1	18.2
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	462¼	- 5⅛	6.3	23.8
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3090	- 14	4.1	25.0
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2420	- 11	2.8	22.9
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1412	- 11	3.8	16.4

◆AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; ☆ figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

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Money

Wall Street

	Aug 14 midday	+/-
3M	184.02	+1.37
Abbott Labs	111.79	+0.52
AbbVie	250.15	-0.67
Accenture	176.09	-2.40
Adobe	264.69	-5.79
Aflac	121.52	+0.42
Agilent Techs	148.60	-0.69
Air Prods & Chm	308.04	+2.52
Allstate	260.25	-0.23
Alphabet Cl A	345.17	-1.19
Alphabet Cl C	342.84	-1.10
Altria	65.85	+0.77
Amazon	264.33	-0.80
Amer Elec Power	125.58	+0.20
Amer Express	342.30	-1.35
Amer Tower	175.84	+1.65
Ameren Corp	109.68	+0.56
American Int	76.68	+0.65
American Wtr W	136.26	-0.20
Ameriprise	570.38	-0.30
Ametek	255.94	-0.28
Amgen	412.48	-5.36
Amphenol	166.87	+1.12
Analog Devices	384.58	+3.42
Aon Corp	356.86	-0.22
Apple	305.45	+0.20
Applied Mats	508.42	-26.12
Archer Daniels	80.11	-0.04
Arthur J Gallagher	252.21	-1.28
AT&T	24.95	+0.38
Auto Data Proc	273.20	-3.03
Autodesk	252.81	-5.15
Autozone	3047.81	+7.44
AvalonBay	184.69	+0.78
Baker Hughes	64.96	+1.52
Ball Corp	61.88	-0.05
Bank NY Mellon	162.65	+0.40
Bank of America	64.44	+0.35
Baxter Intl	26.80	-0.25
Becton Dickinsn	183.15	+1.18
Berkshire Hath	506.53	-0.40
Best Buy	86.26	+0.91
BlackRock	1178.08	-4.76
Boeing	230.71	+0.38
Booking Holdings	214.56	+1.23
Boston Sci	52.58	+0.89
Bristol-Myers Sq	63.96	-0.69
Broadcom Ord	394.83	-22.98
Canadian Pacific Kansas	94.21	+0.29
Capital One Fin	227.20	+3.37
Cardinal Health	233.12	+1.88
Caterpillar	858.43	+3.83
Cencora	311.66	+1.65
Centene	66.91	+0.87
Chevron	200.73	+3.03
Church & Dwight	100.76	-0.56
Cigna Group	281.48	+3.49
Cincinnati Fin	173.38	+0.71
Cintas	199.60	-1.10
Cisco Systems	111.17	-2.30
Citigroup	138.64	-0.09
Citizens Financial	74.66	+0.55
Clorox Co	105.01	-1.53
CME	270.65	+3.44
CMS Energy	71.22	+0.71
Coca-Cola	87.70	+0.28
Cognizant Tech	58.64	-0.65
Colgate-Palm	92.23	-0.70
Comcast	26.39	+0.20
Conocophillips	126.83	+2.31
Consd Edison	108.78	+0.39
Constellation Brs	137.35	+1.00
Corning	166.12	+7.58
Costco Whole	962.37	+0.52
Crown Castle Int	76.02	+0.29
CSX	50.41	+0.27
Cummins	635.28	+3.67
CVS Health	97.27	+2.28
Danaher	203.31	-0.58
Deere&co	610.54	-1.84
Delta Air Lines	89.58	-1.73
Devon Energy	45.39	+1.00
Digital Realty Tr.	200.54	+2.96
Dollar General	123.64	+1.56
Dollar Tree	129.99	+0.46
Dominion Energy	68.86	+0.33
Dover	207.71	+1.05
Dow Inc	31.04	+0.68
D.R. Horton	149.14	-0.74
DTE Energy	140.70	+1.17
Duke Energy	123.81	-0.68
Eaton	453.51	+0.18
eBay	103.83	-0.75
Ecolab	275.69	-0.57
Edison Intl	71.09	+0.41
Edwards Life	91.92	-0.64
Eli Lilly	1186.25	-22.75
Emmerson Elec	163.37	-0.84
Entergy	107.84	+0.93
EOG Res	142.48	+1.07
Equifax	182.40	-3.18
Equinix	1095.52	+21.74
Essex Property	287.78	+0.39
Estee Lauder	87.17	-0.15
Evrsurce Engy	72.32	+0.10
Exelon	45.81	+0.21
Extra Space Stor	148.68	-0.72
ExxonMobil Hldgs	160.76	+2.15
Fastenal	51.02	-0.32
Fedex	335.83	-3.52
Fifth Third	58.12	+0.18
First Solar	226.99	+3.30
FirstEnergy	47.29	+0.45
FIS	43.01	-1.12
Ford Motor	14.18	+0.28
Freeport-Mcm	66.74	-0.09
Garmin	311.26	-0.67
GE Aerospace	365.35	+4.71
Gen Dynamics	395.13	+2.17
General Mills	39.12	+0.20
General Mtrs	86.70	+0.31
Genuine Parts	134.52	-0.83
Gilead Sciences	137.94	-0.20
Global Payments	92.55	-2.28
Goldman Sachs	1034.80	-7.83
Grainger (WW)	1322.53	+1.15
Halliburton	34.17	+1.33
Hartford Insurance	138.16	+0.35
HCA Healthcare	406.00	-5.74
Hershey	184.42	-1.70
Home Depot	338.66	-3.04
Honeywell Intl	233.76	-0.23
HP Ent	59.09	-0.73
HP Inc	30.30	-1.00
Humana	386.39	+1.42
Huntington	17.88	+0.11
IBM	234.42	-2.72
ICE Group	154.36	-0.88
IFF	83.88	-0.18
Illinois Tool	289.36	-1.62
Illumina	192.46	-0.18
Ingersoll-Rand	83.76	-0.52
Intel	103.55	-1.01
Intuit	346.52	-11.77
Intuitive Surg	400.09	-1.18
Iron Muntn	127.96	+1.34
Johnsn & Johnsn	260.84	-1.24
Johnson Controls	152.54	+1.09
JP Morgan Chase	362.73	-0.38
Kellanova		
Keurig Dr Pepper	31.55	+0.42
Kimberley-Clark	110.91	+0.20
Kinder Morgan	32.66	+0.57
KLA Corp	202.88	-6.49
Kroger	56.99	-0.24
L3 Harris	291.20	+2.74
Labcorp Hldgs	320.60	-1.99
Lam Research	329.66	-7.35
Lennar	86.76	-0.78
Lockheed Martin	607.60	+9.59
Lowes Co	217.29	-0.93
LyondellBasell	63.86	+1.46
Marathon Petrol	355.22	-1.15
Marriott Intl	355.38	+2.85
Marsh	188.33	-0.36
MartinMarietta	548.29	+3.53
MasterCard	568.02	+0.98
McCormick	54.42	-0.03
McDonald's	273.71	+1.46
McKesson	865.90	+9.21
Medtronic	91.81	+1.23
Merck & Co	134.44	-1.11
Meta Platforms	592.26	-2.71
Metlife	97.63	+0.16
Microchip	77.99	+0.30
Micron	963.75	+13.93
Microsoft	497.68	+0.80
Mondelez	63.61	+0.08
Monster Bvrge	46.66	-0.02
Moodys	484.01	-4.41
Morgan Stanley	216.32	-2.06
Motorala Sols	467.61	+2.57
M&T Bank Corp	254.68	+1.43
Nasdaq Inc	97.00	-0.59
Netapp	205.52	+0.53
Netflix	78.25	+0.01
Newmont Mining	117.77	+3.58
NextEra Energy	86.46	+0.45
Nike	40.87	-0.36
Norfolk Sthn	336.64	-1.21
Northrup Grum	584.01	+9.27
Nucor	270.12	-2.17
Nvidia	225.64	+0.34
Occidental Petr	58.48	+0.78
Omnicom	87.52	-0.84
ONEOK	94.45	+1.81
Oracle	152.82	-3.40
O'Reilly	91.49	-1.09
Paccar	130.89	+0.17
Parker-Hannifin	1053.73	-5.14
Paychex	122.26	-3.14
Paypal Hldngs	59.85	-0.74
PepsiCo	140.70	+0.08
Pfizer	26.80	
PG&E	17.64	+0.18
Philip Morris Intl	190.82	+1.91
Phillips66	232.60	-0.01
PNC Finl	256.73	+1.53
PPG Inds	114.10	-0.63
PPL	35.90	+0.22
Price T Rowe	110.39	-0.91
Procter & Gmbl	144.38	+0.12
Progressive Cp	210.28	+1.41
Prologis	141.03	-0.18
Prudential Finl	125.03	+0.28
Public Serv Ent	76.16	+0.23
Public Storage	326.23	-2.49
PulteGroup	130.16	-0.39
Qualcomm	164.51	-0.28
Quanta Services	689.12	+16.34
Realty Income	62.97	+0.02
Regeneron Pharm	802.01	-3.96
Regions Financial	31.75	+0.09
Republic Serv	216.14	+0.92
Rockwell Auto	447.97	+2.46
Roper Tech	398.57	+1.07
Ross Stores	244.27	-0.69
RTX Corp	222.02	+1.54
RylCaribbean	306.47	-3.41
Salesforce Inc	196.79	-4.58
Schwab (Charles)	110.81	+0.75
Seagate Tech	960.42	+39.05
Sempra	86.97	+0.48
Sherwin-Williams	357.43	-4.12
Simon Prop	220.43	-1.04
SLB	53.74	+1.68
Southern Co	93.12	+0.33
S&P Global	417.55	-5.12
Starbucks	107.84	-0.71
State Street	190.98	+1.13
Stryker	340.20	-0.89
Synchrony Fin	80.64	+0.56
Sysco	83.55	
Target	154.61	-0.90
Texas Insts	277.21	+3.78
TheKraftHeinz	25.39	+0.01
Thermo Fisher	593.76	-2.13
TJX	152.38	-1.43
Tractor Supply Co	36.02	-0.15
Transdigm Group	1246.17	-0.14
Travelers	370.66	+0.66
Truist Finl Corp	53.06	+0.07
Tyson Foods	58.20	+1.81
Union Pacific	297.02	-0.77
UnitedHealth	402.70	+3.64
Untd Rentals	1152.33	+31.75
UPS	104.75	-0.79
US Bancorp	65.25	+0.09
Valero Energy	341.00	-1.92
Ventas	91.26	+0.97
Verisk Analyts	182.71	-3.23
Verizon Comm	48.48	+0.27
Vertex Pharma	507.88	-8.56
Visa	365.17	-0.28
Vulcan Mats	279.60	+2.08
Walmart	115.25	-0.47
Walt Disney	106.30	+1.50
Waste Mgt	225.74	+1.53
Waters	412.28	-1.23
WEC Engy	109.93	-0.35
Wells Fargo	88.32	+0.21
Welltower	235.79	+1.35
Western Digital	495.18	+7.88
Weyerhaeuser	24.57	-0.26
Williams Cos	74.51	+1.47
Xcel Energy	79.16	+0.18
Xylem	119.65	-0.67
Yum Brands	149.26	-1.59
Zimmer	100.19	+0.62
Zoetis	74.46	-1.38

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	87.19	87.26	86.44	86.62	172947	1326786
	26-Dec	87.14	87.14	86.41	86.57	196	2169
	27-Mar				86.49	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.25	96.2525	96.25	96.2525	5795	392751
	26-Sep	96.155	96.16	96.145	96.155	100482	431060
	26-Dec	95.95	95.965	95.93	95.945	85262	563792
	27-Mar	95.815	95.825	95.775	95.79	46763	387952
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.75	95.76	95.7	95.715	64117	391831
	27-Sep	95.73	95.745	95.675	95.695	62321	244798
	27-Dec	95.75	95.76	95.69	95.71	56306	285243
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.41	97.41	97.395	97.4	86176	642077
	26-Dec	97.26	97.26	97.23	97.24	119928	940905
	27-Mar	97.16	97.165	97.12	97.13	126356	478708
	27-Jun	97.12	97.12	97.07	97.08	116942	487796
	27-Sep	97.12	97.12	97.065	97.075	92641	438246
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.0475	100.0475	100.0475	100.0475	239	70474
	26-Sep	100.04	100.045	100.04	100.04	8913	74296
	26-Dec	99.99	100	99.99	99.99	7624	53599
	27-Mar	99.905	99.915	99.895	99.895	3025	36091
	27-Jun	99.825	99.83	99.805	99.81	3411	25026
	27-Sep	99.76	99.765	99.74	99.745	2478	25610
	27-Dec	99.71	99.715	99.685	99.695	1564	19703
FTSE100	26-Sep	10824.5	10834	10751	10782	38319	481989
	26-Dec				10848.5	5	1302
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8942.6	0	
	26-Dec				8989.3	0	

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Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	53680.00 (-159.99)
Nasdaq	26686.73 (-116.29)
S&P 500	7778.42 (-20.57)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	68713.80 (+405.21)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25116.85 (-279.66)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1117.82 (-1.77)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9313.20 (-68.20)
Frankfurt	
DAX	26440.31 (+140.57)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5743.59 (+23.54)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5664.48 (-44.24)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8636.80 (-13.76)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14390.67 (-84.46)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6539.59 (-5.88)
London	
FTSE100	10750.11 (-22.56)
FTSE250	24867.42 (+29.71)
FTSE350	5868.68 (-10.18)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5082.73 (-19.29)
FTSE All Share	5805.22 (-9.88)
FTSE Non Financials	6325.66 (-21.33)
TechMark Focus	9617.23 (+52.74)
US$	1.3549 (+0.0040)
Euro	1.1699 (-0.0002)
SDR	0.9902 (+0.0016)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7

Commodities

Natural Gas $

2.763	+0.036

Light Crude Oil

81.67	+0.42

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI SEP 26	81.69	0.44
WTI OCT 26	80.81	0.37
WTI NOV 26	79.45	0.38
WTI DEC 26	77.89	0.29
WTI JAN 27	76.53	0.23

Products

Fuel Oil	480.531	-0.169
Euro Naphtha CIF NWE	726.857	-4.72

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Sep1237.25-1236.75	Jan 1040-1039.5
Oct1184.75-1184	Feb 1012.5-1012
Nov1129.75-1129.25	
Dec1075.75-1075.25	Volume: 142255

Brent

Oct 87.8-87.78	Jan 82.08-82.05
Nov 85.86-85.84	Feb 80.79-80.76
Dec 83.75-83.73	Volume: 621029

Cocoa

Sep 4133 +13	Sep 4251 +2
Dec 4176 +13	Dec 4195 -4
Mar 4290 +18	Mar 4290 +18
May 4295 +12	May 4295 +12
Jul 4302 +17	Volume: 23125

Robusta Coffee

Sep 3591 -75	May 3505 -86
Nov 3568 -76	Jul 3535 -40
Jan 3555 -75	
May 3505 -86	Volume: 28298

White Sugar

Oct 509.6 -8.3	Aug 501.8 -5.2
Dec 507.9 -8.1	Oct 496.6 -4.6
May 508.1 -7.1	
May 508.1 -7.1	Volume: 21699

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov 203.5 +2.5	May209.75 +2.75
Jan 202.5	Jul 209.25
Mar 204.75	Volume: 6815

London Metal Exchange (Official)

Cash	3Mth	26-Sep
Copper		
14570 +175.86	14164.5 +16.5	14242 +22.76
Lead		
1846 +2.56	1895 +7	1910.5 +8.1
Zinc		
3862.5 +21.49	3760 +8.5	3744.3 +3.23
Aluminium		
3249.24 -15.69	3252.5 -7.5	3248.89 -5.69
Nickel		
16617.29 +41.6	16790 +14	16886 +42.75
Nickel		
55932 +368	56140 +296	56311 +389

Eurotop 100

	Close	+/-	12mthhigh	12mthlow	Yield	P/E
ABB Ltd S SF	82.78	+1.02	89.14	52.66	1.14	31.96
Air Liquide Fr	168.26	-4.12	189.80	154.86	2.00	32.24
Airbus Fr	215.40	+1.80	221.30	157.42	1.49	40.19
Allianz G	442.70	+9.20	443.90	338.80	3.86	15.47
Anglo American UK GBP	38.50	-1.72	42.39	21.15	0.75	-15.77
Anheuser-Busch InBev B	68.62	-4.24	76.18	48.87	1.17	25.89
AP Moller-Maersk A Dn KR	19800.00	+3210.00	18440.00	11870.00	2.42	51.16
AP Moller-Maersk B Dn KR	20700.00	+3590.00	19150.00	11840.00	2.32	53.49
Arcelor Mittal	63.74	+0.76	65.24	27.42	0.81	37.49
ASML Holding Nl	1579.60	+80.60	1741.00	611.80	0.49	79.34
AstraZeneca UK GBP	114.60	-4.36	157.32	98.92	2.09	23.53
Atlas Copco A Sw Kr	208.40	-1.20	212.30	146.70	1.44	38.38
Atlas Copco B Sw Kr	181.15	-1.40	185.20	130.35	1.66	33.36
AXA Fr	45.05		45.66	36.55	5.15	12.55
Banco Santander Es	12.90	+0.04	13.12	7.99	1.51	14.17
Barclays UK GBP	5.21	+0.04	5.54	3.53	2.21	11.88
BASF G	51.15	-0.35	55.05	41.48	4.40	28.10
Bayer G	47.79	-2.02	53.92	25.78	0.23	12.99
BBVA Es	24.95	+0.35	25.28	15.28	2.99	95.96
BHP Group UK GBP	32.06	-1.40	34.95	19.18	3.20	24.43
BMW G	59.40	-0.38	97.92	56.40	7.41	5.00
BNP Paribas Fr	112.10	-0.34	113.82	65.12	4.60	11.71
BP UK GBP	5.23	+0.06	6.09	3.99	4.75	
Brit Amer Tobacco GBP	42.14	-2.07	53.26	36.77	5.81	12.01
BT Group UK GBP	2.00	+0.01	2.42	1.73	4.15	18.21
Centrica UK GBP	1.56	+0.02	2.20	1.51	3.64	-103.97
Christian Dior Fr	418.00	-17.80	611.50	414.80	3.42	14.48
Compagnie de Saint Gobain	83.94	-1.50	100.75	65.88	2.74	12.53
Danone Fr	67.24	-0.98	80.14	60.64	3.35	25.96
Deutsche Bank G	33.38	+0.49	34.26	23.82	3.00	10.56
Deutsche Telekom G	28.67	-0.37	34.36	23.53	3.49	14.55
Diageo UK GBP	17.64	-0.26	21.42	12.96	2.09	30.60
Enel It	9.49	-0.55	10.31	7.69	5.16	25.66
Engie (FR)	25.72	-1.00	29.89	17.20	4.01	16.92
Eni	23.70	+0.41	25.02	14.48	4.64	16.80
EON G	17.45	-1.57	20.39	14.60	3.27	26.44
Fresenius SE & Co	47.08				2.23	60.36
GlaxoSmKline UK GBP	18.18	-1.43	22.82	12.89	3.85	12.88
Glencore Xstrata	5.61	+0.04	7.07	2.82	2.24	186.93
Heineken NV Nl	73.52	-3.62	80.44	63.90	2.61	15.78
Henkel KgaA G	71.25	-3.20	77.25	57.85	2.88	24.32
Henkel KgaA Pref G	76.32	-3.48	84.20	61.28	2.71	14.32
Hermes Intl SCA Fr	1576.00	-59.50	2300.00	1465.50	1.14	35.88
HSBC UK GBP	15.28	-0.01	16.10	9.28	3.62	17.11
Iberdrola Es	20.20	-0.50	22.08	15.33	2.73	36.59
Imperial Tobacco UK GBP	26.09	-1.82	36.32	25.92	6.39	10.39
Inditex Es	57.60	-1.06	59.42	41.24	2.46	130.61
ING Nl	30.89	+0.40	31.21	20.21	3.68	15.60
Intesa Sanpaolo It	6.92	+0.09	6.92	4.81	5.44	30.07
Linde G	481.88	-8.11	548.20	387.78	1.33	30.95
Lloyds Bank UK GBP	1.15	+0.00	1.18	0.77	3.48	16.46
L'Oreal Fr	379.50	-6.40	408.35	338.85	1.90	29.86
LVMH Fr	458.40	-21.60	654.70	440.00	2.84	20.97
Mercedez-Benz Group AG	46.02	-1.06	62.34	42.62	7.60	4.52
Munich Re G	517.80	+2.40	575.60	437.40	4.63	24.73
National Grid GBP	11.94	-0.07	14.29	10.00	4.06	18.22
Nestle S SF	81.01	-0.20	87.09	70.29	3.83	23.08
Novartis S SF	122.44	-3.54	131.50	96.03	3.02	40.14
Orange	16.41	-0.05	18.80	13.07	4.82	20.01
Pernod Ricard NV Fr	69.16	-1.16	107.45	58.60	6.80	10.77
Phillips Elect Nl	23.66	+0.53	27.70	20.90	3.59	47.32
Prudential UK GBP	10.25	-0.20	12.38	9.10	1.92	9.01
Reckitt Benckiser UK GBP	51.14	-1.92	65.23	36.64	4.23	10.92
Richemont S SF	192.45	-3.00	202.20	127.20	1.71	41.04
Rio Tinto UK GBP	70.59	-4.69	91.17	44.37	4.86	15.58
Roche Holdings S SF	355.10	+25.10	374.60	291.00	2.76	21.95
Rolls-Royce UK GBP	15.41	+0.11	15.86	9.90	0.71	22.20
RWE AG	58.90	+2.68	62.00	33.72	2.04	23.75
Sanofi Aventis Fr	75.52	+0.21	91.15	71.25	5.46	9.64
SAP G	180.14	+2.18	244.30	127.50	1.39	29.34
Schneider Electric Fr	306.40	+2.70	312.30	208.80	1.37	35.67
Shell	32.88	+0.10	37.59	25.54	4.60	10.85
Siemens G	284.00	+4.20	291.50	198.00	1.88	26.97
Standard Chartered UK GBP	22.19		22.78	12.85	2.31	15.39
Swatch Gp BR S SF	196.55	+7.50	223.10	133.10	2.29	52.55
Swiss Re AG S SF	139.45	+0.95	155.30	114.05	4.52	10.69
Telefonica Es	3.68	+0.01	4.89	3.24	6.60	2.44
Tenaris SA It	23.22	+0.08	27.82	14.54	4.43	6.99
Tesco UK GBP	4.62	-0.14	5.10	4.11	3.14	16.78
TotalEnergies	75.78	+1.69	81.34	49.24	4.62	11.00
UBS SA SF	43.55	+0.09	44.44	28.25	1.97	22.22
Vinci	120.85	-4.50	143.15	112.40	4.18	13.97
Vivendi	1.69	-0.03	3.21	1.56	2.36	15.40
Volkswagen G	73.72	-2.60	109.15	69.20	7.14	5.55
Volvo B Sw Kr	340.20	-15.40	374.50	244.90	3.82	20.08
Zurich Fin S SF	592.80	-0.40	626.00	521.00	5.06	18.54
Vodafone UK GBP	1.22	+0.01	1.31	0.83	3.26	-86.18

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%

ECB Refi 2.40%

Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7488	8.7418	-144.44	-410.31
Euro	1.1700	1.1693	-15	-41.95
Montreal	1.8800	1.8781	-25.5	-77.5
New York	1.3551	1.3480	-0.69	-1.63
Oslo	12.7864	12.8181	40.92	144.79
Tokyo	215.8710	215.0970	-53.5	-155.43
Zurich	1.1000	1.0974	-37.53	-111.94

FTSE volumes

(000s)

3i Group	1,458	InterCont'l Hotels	167
Aberdeen Group	8,894	Intertek Group	1,938
AB Foods	506	Intl Cons Airlines	6,909
Admiral	342	Investec	3,125
Airtel Africa	1,253	JD Sports	25,195
Alliance Witan	461	Kingfisher	3,358
Ang Am	25,217	Land Sec	1,889
Antofagasta	1,274	Legal & Gen	17,027
AstraZeneca	3,960	Lion Finance	88
Autotrader Group	2,526	Lloyds Bkg Gp	89,453
Aviva	13,141	LondonMetric	4,442
Babcock Intl	1,443	Lon Stock Ex	1,612
BAE Sys	9,758	M&G	3,992
Barclays	27,761	Marks & Spen	13,425
Barratt Redrow	9,629	Melrose Ind	5,807
Beazley	2,180	Metlen Energy	93
BP	110,177	Natl Grid	8,694
Brit. Amer. Tob	4,629	NatWest Group	18,303
British Land	1,566	Next	123
BT Group	10,311	Pearson	1,380
Bunzl	636	Pershing Square	169
Burberry	887	Persimmon	1,719
Centrica	8,706	Polar CapTech	1,631
Coca-Cola Europac	129	Prudential	4,553
Coca-Cola HBC	442	Reckitt Benck	2,995
Compass	1,790	RELX	5,601
Computacenter	223	Rentokil Initial	17,761
ConvaTec	10,125	Rio Tinto	10,063
Croda	1,038	Rolls-Royce	17,092
DCC Energy	408	Sainsbury	6,583
Diageo	3,066	Schroders	1,687
Diploma	257	Scot Mort Inv Tst	1,177
Endeavour	467	Segro	2,068
Entain	4,069	Severn Trent	477
Experian	2,013	Shell	11,446
F&C Inv Trust	1,439	Smith & Nephew	1,883
Fresnillo	3,572	Smiths Gp	581
Games Workshop	82	Spirax Group	136
Glencore	64,430	SSE	1,423
GSK	14,891	Standard Chart	4,439
Haleon	6,422	Standard Life	1,234
Halma	737	St James's Place	1,412
Hiscox	715	Tesco	18,774
Howden Joinery	1,222	The Sage Grp	3,966
HSBC	42,408	Tritax Big Box	5,819
ICG	881	Unilever	1,716
IG Group	3,856	Utd. Utilities	1,230
IMI	706	Vodafone	71,474
Imperial Brands	4,405	Weir	588
Informa	2,174	Whitbread	374

Gold/precious metals

Bullion: Open $4351.862

Close $4389.762 **High** $4396.945

Low $4311.01

AM $4349.90 **PM** $4390.70

Platinum $1746.3

Silver $64.92

Palladium $1320.762

Dollar rates

Australia	1.41010-1.41090
Canada	1.38741-1.38744
Denmark	6.45667-6.45713
Euro	0.86350-0.86390
Hong Kong	7.84722-7.84761
Japan	159.27200-159.27600
Malaysia	4.08400-4.08800
Norway	9.43588-9.43955
Singapore	1.27877-1.27883
Sweden	9.51423-9.51664
Switzerland	0.81182-0.81185

Other Sterling

Argentine peso	2017.49133-2017.49329
Australian dollar	1.91139-1.91150
Bahrain dinar	0.51000-0.51200
Brazilian real	7.10620-7.10820
Euro	1.17000-1.17080
Hong Kong dollar	10.63300-10.63700
Indian rupee	129.56180-129.64180
Indonesian rupiah	24157.05078-24197.05078
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41720-0.41920
Malaysian ringgit	5.53790-5.53990
New Zealand dollar	2.29856-2.29908
Singaporean dollar	1.73258-1.73390
South African rand	21.93710-21.94987
UAE dirham	4.97810-4.98010

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.91141 (+0.0021)
Canada $	1.87992 (+0.00234)
Denmark Kr	8.74897 (+0.00732)
Euro	1.17 (+0.0006)
Hong Kong $	10.633 (+0.053)
Hungary	423.98 (-0.31)
Indonesia	24157.05 (+77.87)
Israel	4.0045 (+0.0018)
Japan Yen	215.831 (+0.714)
New Zealand $	2.29836 (-0.00715)
Norway Kr	12.78861 (-0.03509)
Poland	5.0388 (+0.00523)
Russia	114.166 (+2.143)
S Africa	21.9402 (+0.1343)
Sweden Kr	12.8916 (+0.00123)
Switzerland Fr	1.10011 (+0.00263)
Turkey Lira	64.8855 (+0.3857)
USA $	1.3551 (+0.0071)

Data provided by ICE. Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by ICE or this publication

Unit-linked insurance investments

ABBEY LIFE
01202 292373
80 Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth
BH8 8AL

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American Ser 4	6280.60	6611.20	+26.40	...
Custodian S4	682.00	717.90	-1.20	...
Equity Ser 4	1171.00	1232.60	-1.80	...
Ethical S4	526.40	554.10	+2.30	...
European S4	1436.30	1511.90	+4.30	...
Fixed Int Ser 4	797.60	839.60	-1.10	...
High Inc Ser 4	3595.60	3784.90	-12.90	...
International S4	1276.20	1343.40	+8.00	...
Japan Ser 4	854.20	899.10	+18.60	...
Man Ser 4	3133.10	3298.00	+9.90	...
Money Ser 4	583.60	614.40	+0.20	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	973.60	1024.90	-12.30	...

Formerly Hill Samuel Life Assurance Ltd

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Fund	4627.50	4896.80	+28.90	...
European Fund	7565.60	8005.90	+22.90	...
Fixed Intl	893.60	945.60	-1.20	...
Income Fund	3889.70	4116.10	-33.50	...
International	3470.70	3672.70	+22.00	...
Managed Series A	2972.60	3145.60	+11.40	...
Managed Units	5468.90	5756.70	+21.20	...
Money Series A	533.80	564.90	+0.20	...
Money Units	759.80	799.80	+0.30	...
Property Series A	1354.50	1433.40	-17.00	...
Property Units	2534.30	2667.60	-31.60	...
Smaller Cos	2991.90	3166.00	+13.20	...

Formerly Target Life Assurance Co Ltd

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit	392.60	413.30	+0.10	...
Financial Ser 1	432.00	454.70	+3.80	...
Fixed Interest	591.20	622.30	-0.80	...
Managed	2881.80	3033.40	+10.90	...
Mngd Growth	1255.40	1321.50	+8.30	...
Property	793.20	834.90	-9.90	...
TSB Intl	2436.90	2565.10	+15.40	...

AEGON SCOTTISH EQUITABLE
08456 100010
Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh EH12 9SE

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	3299.56	3473.22	+6.83	...
Cash	306.17	322.28	+0.14	...
Distribution	107.07	112.71	-0.05	...
Ethical	805.75	848.16	-4.31	...
European	1911.67	2012.28	-5.65	...
Fixed Interest	504.80	531.37	-0.59	...
Global	547.56	576.37	+0.90	...
International	1655.17	1742.28	+3.40	...
Japan	703.95	741.00	+10.15	...
Mixed	1231.59	1296.41	-1.20	...
Pacific	2514.51	2646.85	+57.69	...
Technology	11047.10	11628.60	+17.90	...
UK Equity	1198.71	1261.80	-9.77	...

ALBA LIFE
50 Bothwell St, Glasgow G2 6HR
0141 248 2000
Formerly Britannia
Life

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
European	2400.00	2526.30	-8.30	...
Far East	913.40	961.40	+17.40	...
Fixed Interest	816.50	859.50	-0.80	...
International	2248.40	2366.70	+12.80	...
Japan	1130.40	1189.90	+24.80	...
Managed Fund	2028.00	2134.80	+3.50	...
Money Market	444.00	467.40	+0.20	...
North America	2343.40	2466.70	+9.90	...
Property	954.40	1004.70	-2.50	...
UK Equity	4000.40	4211.00	-33.60	...

Pensions

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity	2920.30	3074.00	-28.30	...
European	3159.40	3325.70	-13.20	...
Far Eastern	789.90	831.50	+17.60	...
Fixed Interest	845.50	890.00	-1.00	...
International	2075.80	2185.10	+13.00	...
Japan	588.10	619.00	+14.70	...
Managed	1502.90	1582.00	+2.90	...
Money Market	542.60	571.10	+0.30	...
North America	3723.70	3919.60	+17.80	...
Property	902.90	950.40	-2.40	...

AXA SUN LIFE
PO Box 1810, Bristol BS99 5SN
AXA Assurance-02476 236600
Sun Life-0117 989 3000
AXA Equity & Law-02476 235400
Life Assnce-AXA Equity & Law Series 6.1% AMC

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balced Ser 6	3429.00	3609.50	+4.50	...
Europe Ser 6	2755.40	2900.40	-11.40	...
UK Equities Ser 6	5694.30	5994.00	-40.20	...

Life Funds-Sun Life (Inc Birmingham Midshires) & AXA Assurance 1% AMC

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Acc	524.50	552.10	+0.10	...
Distribution Fund	381.30	401.30	-0.80	...
Equity Acc	8327.60	8765.90	-58.70	...
European	1301.30	1369.80	-5.40	...
Far Eastern Acc	3345.50	3521.60	+56.40	...
Fixed Int Acc	975.30	1026.60	-2.40	...
Global Eqty Acc	3993.30	4203.50	+27.30	...
Japan Acc	512.30	539.30	+3.30	...
Managed Acc	4203.10	4424.30	+5.60	...
North Amer Acc	4982.00	5244.20	-0.80	...
Pacific Acc	2602.40	2739.30	+55.70	...
Property Acc	1224.70	1289.20	-0.40	...

BARCLAYS LIFE ASSURANCE CO LTD
0845 603 5000
Level 12, 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
500 Accum	2126.01	2237.90	-7.27	...
America Acc	4674.12	4920.12	+22.73	...
Comb Inc Acc	3767.34	3965.62	+10.22	...
Equity Acc	5677.87	5976.71	-18.71	...
Far East Gwth	2399.58	2525.88	+77.17	...
Gilt 2 Init	187.00	196.84	-0.38	...
Gilt Edged Acc	852.82	897.71	-1.20	...
Inter 2 Init	695.88	732.50	+6.21	...
International Acc	3171.47	3338.39	+30.41	...
Japan Acc	694.00	730.52	+14.23	...
Managed 2 Init	685.11	721.17	+1.40	...
Managed Acc	3111.83	3275.61	+8.44	...
Managed Alpha	2430.46	2558.38	-8.31	...
Money Acc	486.83	512.45	+0.20	...
Prop 2 Init	218.67	230.17	+0.01	...
Property Acc	991.07	1043.23	+0.69	...
UK Growth Acc	1794.28	1888.72	-5.97	...
Univ Tech Acc	1384.37	1457.23	+13.28	...

& AXA Assurance 1% AM

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity 2 Init	1242.43	1307.82	-4.93	...

CANADA LIFE
01707 651122
2-6 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Fund	578.70	609.10	...	...
Equity Fund	4057.00	4270.00	...	...
European	2512.00	2644.00	...	...
Fixed Interest	951.00	1001.00	...	...
International	3669.00	3862.00	...	...
Intl Mgd	5127.00	5396.00	...	...
Japanese	551.40	580.40	...	...
Managed Fund	3470.00	3652.00	...	...
Money	603.30	635.00	...	...
Multiple Inv	4468.00	4703.00	...	...
North Amer	3443.00	3624.00	...	...
Property Fund	1789.00	1883.00	...	...
UK Equity	6410.00	6747.00	...	...
UK Property	1265.00	1331.00	...	...

CLERICAL MEDICAL INVESTMENT GROUP
Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH 0117 9290566
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	325.80	342.90	+0.10	...
Dist Acc S2	238.50	238.50	-0.50	...
Fidelity Bal	1498.70	1577.60	+4.10	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	523.00	550.50	-0.10	...
Non Eqty	431.50	454.20	-0.20	...
Nth American	5020.30	5284.50	+13.00	...
Property	750.10	789.50	+0.30	...
UK Gwth	1943.70	2045.90	-19.80	...
With Prof Bd S2	127.60	127.60	...	...
With Profits Flex	135.40	135.40	+0.10	...
With Profits Reg	435.00	457.90	+0.20	...

Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	383.30	403.40	+0.20	...
European	3227.70	3397.60	+12.00	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	603.20	634.80	-0.10	...
Halifax	150.00	157.80	+0.10	...
Nth American	8394.10	8835.80	+31.40	...
PP Bal Pens	1577.30	1660.20	+5.50	...
PP Caut Pens	461.20	485.40	-0.30	...
PP UK Gth Pens	1800.00	1894.60	-18.10	...
PP UK Prop Pens	840.40	884.60	+0.40	...
With Profits Reg	837.20	881.30	+0.60	...
With Profits Spec	829.40	873.10	+0.60	...

COUNTRYWIDE ASSURED
Harbour House, Portwat, Preston, Lancs
PR2 2PR
CA Funds 0800 262536

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Life	247.50	260.50	+0.10	...
Deposit Pen	354.20	372.80	+0.20	...
Intl Life	1591.30	1675.00	+9.70	...
Intl Pen	2347.00	2470.50	+17.10	...
Mgd Life	1104.10	1162.20	+1.00	...
Mgd Pen	1650.00	1736.80	+1.90	...
UK Eqty Life	1187.60	1250.10	-4.30	...
UK Eqty Pen	1573.10	1655.80	-6.80	...

CWA Series Funds 0870 600 0014

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Fd	2515.20	2647.60	+9.30	...
Glob Cash	403.50	424.70	+0.10	...
Glob Eqty	5495.20	5784.40	+1.00	...
Glob Fxd Int	1370.30	1442.40	-3.10	...
Glob Mgd	3253.70	3424.90	+3.30	...
Glob Prop	698.70	735.50	-0.90	...
Managed Fd	4066.00	4280.00	+4.10	...
Property Fd	574.40	604.60	-0.70	...

FRIENDS PROVIDENT
01722 413366
Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	358.90	377.80	+0.20	...
European	1818.50	1914.20	+9.50	...
Fixed Inter Life	702.90	739.80	-1.60	...
Index Linked	542.40	571.00	-0.20	...
Managed	1500.90	1579.90	+6.60	...
North American	1977.00	2081.10	-0.30	...
Overseas Equity	2767.50	2913.10	+18.60	...
Pacific Basin	860.90	906.20	+14.60	...
Property	764.60	804.80	+0.70	...
Stewardship	2366.90	2491.40	-33.20	...
UK Equity	2445.50	2574.20	-3.00	...

Formerly London & Manchester Assurance

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Ex Cap ‡	438.10	...	-0.50	...
Equity Life ‡	2557.40	...	-3.20	...
Fixed Interest ‡	727.60	...	-1.70	...
Fxd Int Ex Cap ‡	128.10	...	-0.30	...
Gtd Dep Ex Cap ‡	62.50	...	+0.10	...
Guaranteed Deposit ‡	469.80	...	+0.30	...
Inter Life ‡	2670.90	...	+17.90	...
Intl Ex Cap ‡	465.10	...	+3.20	...
Prop Ex Cap ‡	116.30	...	+0.10	...
Prop Life ‡	657.70	...	+0.60	...

FP Life Assurance Ex NM

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	5264.20	5541.30	-0.90	...
Deposit	595.80	627.10	+0.40	...
European	4388.50	4619.40	+22.90	...
Fixed Interest	1455.40	1532.00	-3.50	...
Income Acc	6366.20	6701.20	+3.40	...
Income Dist	954.20	1004.40	+0.60	...
International	2726.20	2869.70	+18.10	...
Managed	3325.70	3500.80	+14.40	...
Property	2134.40	2246.70	+1.80	...
Singapore & Mal	1943.70	2046.10	+41.30	...
Tokyo Fund	1559.40	1641.40	+9.80	...
UK Equity	3352.50	3529.00	-4.30	...

Friends Prov (London & Manchester) Ass Ltd Fd

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Flexible Acc ‡	2147.60	...	+9.50	...
Flexible Cap ‡	371.10	...	+1.60	...
Inv Trust Acc ‡	5917.30	...	+65.90	...
Inv Trust Cap ‡	994.90	...	+11.10	...

GUARDIAN
01253 733151
Ballam Road, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire FY8 4JZ

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit	497.30	523.50	+0.20	...
Equity Life	6812.00	7170.50	-22.90	...
European	1149.10	1209.60	+8.80	...
Fixed Interest	1736.30	1827.70	-2.70	...
Index Linked	655.90	690.50	-1.10	...
Inter Life	4592.10	4833.80	+35.20	...
Managed Life	3832.20	4033.90	+10.60	...
North American	2359.60	2483.80	+18.10	...
Pacific	1424.60	1499.60	+11.00	...
Prop Life	1455.90	1532.60	+4.00	...

HALIFAX LIFE LTD
PO Box 285, York Y01 1YB 01904 611110
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced	128.43	135.19	+0.47	...
Foundation	138.44	145.72	+0.55	...
Opportunity	177.29	186.62	+0.96	...

Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced S2	140.93	148.35	+0.61	1.00
Foundation S2	148.82	156.65	+0.74	1.00
Opportunity S2	193.61	203.79	+1.12	1.00

LEGAL & GENERAL INVESTMENT MGMT
0203 1243000
One Coleman Street, EC2R 5AA

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
British Opp	1153.00	1213.70	-3.90	...
Cash	484.40	509.90	+0.20	...
Equity	7108.90	7483.00	-11.30	...
Fixed Interest	1355.10	1426.40	-1.70	...
Index Linked Gilt	592.10	623.30	+1.40	...
International	3952.30	4160.30	+37.50	...
Life Property	1561.90	1644.10	+1.00	...
Managed	4192.20	4412.80	+15.50	...

LINCOLN FINANCIAL GROUP
Barnett Way, Barnwood, Gloucester, GL4 3RZ
01452 371371 For Further prices 0800 7315139
Life

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Mgd 3	2078.20	2187.50	+7.60	...
European	1209.20	1272.80	+8.30	...
Far Eastern	2648.00	2787.30	+53.70	...
Green	796.80	838.70	+1.60	...
International	920.30	968.70	+5.90	...
Japan	399.70	420.70	+0.90	...
North Amer	6535.10	6879.00	+14.30	...
UK Equity Gwth	2830.10	2979.00	+4.10	...

Pension

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Mgd 3	4985.50	5247.80	+15.20	...
European	2042.30	2149.70	+7.10	...
Far Eastern	4498.80	4735.50	+98.90	...
Green	1361.80	1433.40	+3.40	...
International	1476.80	1554.50	+9.90	...
Japan	533.50	561.50	+3.90	...
North Amer	20988.40	22093.00	+53.60	...
UK Eqty Gwth	5250.40	5526.70	-16.30	...
UK Fxd Int	1136.90	1196.70	-1.60	...

LLOYDS TSB LIFE LTD
01634 834000
Mountbatten Hse, Chatham, Kent
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity	2409.60	2536.40	+11.90	...
Managed	5035.50	5035.50	+23.80	...
Income	5152.40	5423.60	-14.20	...
Managed Inv	2569.60	2704.80	+11.90	...

Life Funds-Series Two Current Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	5530.30	5821.30	+42.10	...
Balanced ‡	787.00	...	...	...
Cash	456.00	480.00	+0.20	...
European Gth	1293.00	1361.10	+9.60	...
Fixed Interest	738.10	777.00	-0.20	...
German Growth	2458.50	2587.80	-1.60	...
Income	4718.50	4966.90	-13.20	...
Japan Growth	487.20	512.80	+3.70	...
Managed Inv	2819.40	2967.80	+13.20	...
Pacific Basin	2044.80	2152.50	+15.10	...
Property	1759.00	1851.60	+0.70	...
Smllr Cos Recov	6801.90	7159.90	-19.50	...
Worldwide Gth	3231.10	3401.10	+24.50	...

Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American Pens	3685.50	3879.50	+32.60	...
Cash Pen	354.80	373.50	+0.20	...
European Pen	2572.80	2708.20	+22.80	...
Far East Pen	930.30	979.30	+8.20	...
Fixed Int Pen	525.60	553.30	-0.10	...
FTSE 100	609.30	641.40	-6.40	...
Managed Pen	1479.80	1557.70	+7.40	...
Property Pen	1103.30	1161.30	+0.50	...
UK Equity Pen	1217.80	1281.90	-3.90	...

LONDON LIFE
0117 984 7777
Spectrum Bond Street, Bristol, BS1 3AL

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit	570.90	570.90	+0.20	...
Deposit P	794.80	794.80	+0.50	...
Equity	5852.30	5852.30	-73.00	...
Equity A	1294.60	1362.80	-16.20	...
Equity P	5323.60	5323.60	-78.50	...
Fixed Int A	494.90	521.00	-0.60	...
Fixed Int P	1798.70	1798.70	-2.80	...
Fixed Interest	1169.90	1169.90	-1.40	...
Index Stock A	481.60	507.00	+1.60	...
Index Stock P	792.70	792.70	+3.30	...
Indexed Stock	645.00	645.00	+2.10	...
International	2353.80	2353.80	+12.70	...
International A	1402.30	1476.20	+7.60	...
International P	3288.20	3288.20	+18.60	...
Mixed	3346.90	3346.90	+6.90	...
Mixed A	1048.90	1104.20	+2.20	...
Mixed P	3415.50	3415.50	+7.90	...
Property	873.20	873.20	+0.40	...
Property A	372.70	392.40	+0.10	...
Property P	730.00	730.00	+0.40	...

MERCHANT INVESTORS ASSURANCE CO LTD
St Bartholomews House, Lewins Mead
Bristol BS1 2NH

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Far East	1156.00	1216.80	+20.50	...
Gilt Edged	1323.90	1393.60	-0.60	...
Interest Fund	610.80	642.90	+0.20	...
Intl Equity	3007.70	3166.00	+18.60	...
Managed Fd	1465.60	1542.70	+1.50	...
North American	1236.70	1301.80	+5.60	...
Property	1618.40	1703.60	-7.80	...
UK Equity	1607.90	1692.50	-6.30	...

MGM ASSURANCE
MGM House, Heene Road, Worthing
BN11 2DY 01903 836000

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Acc	419.20	441.26	+0.22	...
Fixed Interest Acc	1250.28	1316.08	-2.36	...
Managed Acc	2126.35	2238.26	+7.25	...
Property	250.20	263.30	...	...
Property Acc	907.67	955.44	-4.29	...

NAT WEST LIFE ASSCE LTD
PO Box 886, Trinity Quay, Bristol BS99 5LJ

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Growth Mgd Pens	799.54	841.62	+2.35	...

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE
Society- Ex NUAM Funds
PO Box 140, Norwich NR3 1PP
01603 622200

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Fund	692.59	729.04	+0.09	...
Eqity Fund	23369.27	24599.23	-113.55	...
Fixed Int Fd	1658.83	1746.14	-2.01	...
Higher Inc Plus	253.86	267.22	-0.20	...
Intl Fund	1942.34	2044.57	+14.29	...
Managed Fund	8597.18	9049.67	+25.29	...
Property Fd	2687.61	2829.06	+3.60	...

Formerly Commercial Union

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	344.90	363.00	...	...
Fxd Int	516.10	543.30	-0.70	...
Index-Lnkd	481.40	506.80	+1.80	...
Int Equity	2100.10	2210.60	+15.30	...
Property	1927.90	2029.40	+5.40	...
UK Equity	2773.30	2919.30	-13.80	...
Var Ann (5) ‡	412.20	...	-1.70	...
Var Ann Acc (5) ‡	8357.40	...	-15.10	...

Formerly General Accident

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	2496.40	2627.80	+23.60	...
Cash Deposit	292.30	307.70	...	...
European Equity	1529.60	1610.10	+6.10	...
Fixed Int	433.40	456.20	-0.60	...
Index-Linked	467.40	492.00	+1.80	...
International	1372.80	1445.00	+9.30	...
Japan Equity	615.70	648.10	+10.80	...
Japan Smllr Cos	629.80	662.90	+11.00	...
Managed	974.40	1025.60	+2.80	...
Pacific Fund	1993.80	2098.70	+66.70	...
Property	651.60	685.90	+0.80	...
UK Equity	1587.70	1671.30	-7.90	...
Unitised Profit	465.00	489.50	+0.40	...

Formerly Provident Mutual

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Initial	93.20	98.10	...	...
Deposit Ord	361.50	380.60	...	...
Equity Init	1057.30	1112.90	-5.20	...
Equity Ord	4162.10	4381.20	-20.60	...
Fixed Int Init	170.00	178.90	-0.20	...
Fixed Int Ord	657.10	691.70	-0.80	...
I-Linked Gilt Init	168.60	177.50	+0.60	...
I-Linked Gilt Ord	590.50	621.60	+2.30	...
Managed Initial	592.30	623.50	+1.70	...
Managed Ord	2307.00	2428.40	+6.60	...
Oseas Equity Init	667.30	702.50	+4.80	...
Oseas Equity Ord	2751.00	2895.80	+20.10	...
Property Init	273.20	287.60	+0.40	...
Property Ord	1049.30	1104.50	+1.30	...

NPI
020 7477 5567
55 Moorgate, London EC2

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Americas	4149.10	4367.50	+21.80	...
Deposit	401.50	422.70	+0.20	...
Far East	2941.20	3096.00	+88.20	...
Fixed Interest	951.50	1001.60	-1.20	...
Indexed Gilt	615.50	647.90	+2.10	...
Managed	2282.60	2402.80	+3.30	...
Overseas Equity	3733.40	3929.90	+18.70	...
UK Equity	3456.30	3638.30	-49.30	...

PEARL
The Pearl Centre, Lynch Wood, Peterborough
PE2 6FY 01733 470 470

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Inv Equity	8608.00	9061.10	-95.30	...
Inv Managed	5284.30	5562.50	+9.20	...
Inv Prop Ac Grs	999.90	1052.60	+0.70	...
Inv Prop Dist	316.40	333.10	+0.20	...
Ret Managed	6445.50	6784.80	+12.20	...

PHOENIX LIFE LTD
Edward Pavilion, Liverpool L3 4SL 0151 239 3000
For further fund prices please ring: 0800 731 2031
Lifestyle Bond Funds (Post 29/01/01)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cautious Mgd ‡	326.50	...	+0.60	...
Deposit ‡	173.80	...	+0.10	...
Equity ‡	419.50	...	-0.60	...
Equity Inc ‡	428.60	...	-1.50	...
European ‡	548.70	...	+1.70	...
Far East ‡	631.80	...	+12.20	...
Fixed Int ‡	207.50	...	-0.20	...
FTSE All Share Tkr ‡	442.00	...	-0.60	...
Income Dist I ‡	127.20	...	-0.30	...
Income Dist II ‡	127.40	...	-0.20	...
International ‡	511.20	...	+3.80	...
Japan Grth ‡	336.10	...	+7.30	...
Managed ‡	395.30	...	+1.40	...
North America ‡	800.40	...	+3.50	...
Pacific Grth ‡	920.80	...	+15.30	...
Property ‡	420.60	...	+0.30	...
UK Leader ‡	425.30	...	-2.20	...
UK Smlr Cos ‡	363.80	...	+2.50	...
With Profits ‡	184.90	...	+0.21	...

Other Life & Pension Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Pens Unit W Prof	302.35	318.26	+0.39	...
With Profits Bd	224.64	224.64	+0.23	...

Pensions Solution Funds (Post 6/4/2001)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Grth ‡	380.50	...	+0.90	...
Cash Deposit ‡	191.00	...	+0.10	...
Equity ‡	448.80	...	-1.00	...
Equity Inc ‡	459.40	...	-1.90	...
European ‡	678.30	...	+2.50	...
Far East ‡	812.00	...	+18.20	...
Fixed Int ‡	234.30	...	-0.30	...
FTSE All Share Tkr ‡	535.70	...	-0.90	...
Index Linked ‡	254.30	...	+1.10	...
International ‡	657.90	...	+5.60	...
Managed Grth ‡	454.00	...	+1.90	...
Pens Protector ‡	196.90	...	-0.80	...
Property ‡	566.20	...	+0.50	...
UK Leader ‡	487.10	...	-3.00	...
Unitised W Prof ‡	256.52	...	+0.33	...

PRUDENTIAL INDIVIDUAL LIFE FUNDS
0345 601601
55 King's Road, Reading, RG1 3AH

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Euro Fund	2804.90	2952.50	-12.20	...
N American Fd	3015.30	3174.00	+18.90	...

Scottish Amicable Life Fds (First Series)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Fund	585.50	616.40	+0.70	...
Equity Fund	9183.40	9666.70	-55.40	...
Fixed Interest	1195.00	1257.90	-2.60	...
Intl Fund	4279.80	4505.00	+0.90	...
L&G UK Prop S2	113.70	119.70	-0.20	...
Managed Fund	4354.60	4583.70	+0.40	...

PRUDENTIAL LIFE FUNDS
01786 448844
PO Box 14962, Craigforth, Stirling, FK9 4ZD

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
BonusBond	374.10	393.80	-4.10	...
Prud Inher Bd (Cap) ‡	130.60	...	-1.00	...
Prud Inher Bd (Inc) ‡	128.60	...	+30.40	...

Scottish Amicable Life Fds (First Series)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	414.70	436.50	+0.20	...
Equity	3610.50	3800.50	-21.60	...
Fixed Interest	885.30	931.90	-1.90	...
Index-Linked	518.70	546.00	+1.60	...
International	3084.70	3247.10	+0.70	...
L&G Prop S1	102.50	107.90	-0.10	...
Managed	2688.80	2830.30	+0.40	...

The M & G Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Bond Acc	576.70	605.70	+0.70	...
Equity Bond Acc @	7342.60	7709.80	-43.60	...
European Bd Acc	2882.50	3026.70	+18.90	...
Extra Yld Bd Acc	6100.80	6406.00	-55.70	...
Gilt Bond Acc	952.70	1000.40	-2.10	...
High Yield Bond @	530.60	557.20	-4.50	...
International Bd	7554.70	7932.50	-75.40	...
Japan Bond Acc	810.10	850.70	+18.30	...
L&G Prop Acc	102.00	107.20	-0.10	...
Managed Bond Acc	4846.40	5088.80	+0.30	...

SAVE & PROSPER INSURANCE AND PENSIONS
St James's House, 27-43 Eastern Road, Romford
RM1 3NH
Customer Helpline:0845 3000144

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Bal Inv Fund	482.90	508.30	+0.40	...
Deposit Fund (2)	720.70	758.60	+0.30	...
Gilt Fund	1510.00	1589.50	-3.50	...
Global Equity Fd	2569.10	2704.30	+15.50	...
Property Fund (46)	253.20	266.50	-0.50	...

SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS
0131 225 2211
19 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 1YE

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American	2935.30	3089.80	+21.90	...
Deposit	348.80	367.20	+0.10	...
European	4108.30	4324.60	-22.70	3.00
Fixed Interest	713.50	751.10	-1.40	...
Global Mgd	2301.60	2422.80	+11.80	...
Index Linked	643.70	677.60	+1.50	...
Managed	1760.50	1853.20	+8.00	...
Pacific	2033.50	2140.60	+43.60	...
Property	875.10	921.20	+6.00	...
UK Equity	2431.80	2559.80	-31.80	...
Worldwide	717.20	755.00	+5.00	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL ASSURANCE
0141 248 6321
301 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5HN

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Fund	313.60	330.10	+0.10	...
European Fund	3198.80	3367.20	-11.40	...
Gilts & Fxd Int	519.20	546.50	-0.70	...
Growth Fund	1171.50	1233.10	+2.00	...
International Fd	2016.30	2122.40	+11.50	...
North American	3786.20	3985.50	+16.30	...
Opportunity Fd	1241.80	1307.20	+2.80	...
Safety Fund	688.90	725.10	+0.30	...
UK Equity	1457.00	1533.70	-12.00	...

SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION
0131 556 9181
6 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YA

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	332.70	350.20	+0.10	...
Equity	1282.40	1349.90	-6.50	...
Fixed Interest	707.30	744.50	-0.60	...
Index Linked	462.70	487.10	+1.60	...
International	1668.70	1756.50	+9.70	...
Managed	1201.20	1264.40	+2.30	...
Property	567.30	597.20	-1.00	...

Formerly Prolific

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Adventurous Mg	1254.60	1320.70	+2.80	...
Bal Gwth Mngd	3631.60	3822.80	+6.80	...
Cash Fund	603.10	634.90	+0.20	...
Cautious Mngd	429.40	452.00	+0.30	...
Equity Fund	5845.70	6153.40	+31.60	...
Equity Inc Dist	188.80	198.80	-1.70	6.45
European	1241.10	1306.50	-4.30	...
Extra Income Fd	1818.60	1914.40	-12.70	...
Far East	3114.90	3278.90	+59.40	...
Fxd Interest Fund	1125.40	1184.70	-1.50	...
High Income	4227.70	4450.30	-44.50	...
International	2013.50	2119.50	+11.00	...
Managed Dist	152.40	160.50	-0.20	6.38
North American	6192.00	6517.90	+26.00	...
Property Fund	848.40	893.10	-1.60	...
Technology	14846.90	15628.40	+187.20	...
UK Mid Cap	4558.80	4798.80	+9.20	...

Henderson Investment Bonds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Deposit Fund	408.90	430.50	+0.10	...
European Fund	2036.00	2143.20	-7.00	...
Far East Fund	3060.80	3221.90	+58.30	...
Fixed Interest	54.70	57.60	...	...
Global Managed	2112.70	2223.90	+4.10	...
North America	2789.40	2936.30	+11.90	...
UK Equity Fd	1458.80	1535.60	-30.10	...

SCOTTISH WIDOWS GROUP
PO Box 902, Edinburgh EH16 5BU

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Fund	401.70	422.80	+0.20	...
Equity Fund	3577.60	3765.90	-9.70	...
Fixed Interest Fd	917.80	966.10	-0.10	...
Indexed Stock Fd	593.90	625.20	+1.60	...
International Fd	3705.80	3900.90	+26.10	...
Inv Cash	619.50	652.10	+0.30	...
Inv Pol 1	8148.60	8148.60	+13.20	...
Inv Pol 2	6841.20	7201.20	+10.80	...
Inv Pol 3	5547.30	5839.20	+8.20	...
Mixed Fund	2666.10	2806.40	+12.20	...
Property Fund	1052.00	1107.40	+0.40	...

SKANDIA LIFE ASSURANCE CO LTD
01703 334411
Skandia House, Portland Terrace
Southampton S09 7BX

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Acc	2683.30	2824.50	-19.00	...

STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE LTD
Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road,
Edinburgh EH1 2DH 0131 225 2552

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	469.30	494.00	...	...
Equity	6452.40	6792.00	...	0.36
European	1367.70	1439.70	...	0.52
Far East	773.40	814.20	...	1.16
Fixed Interest	1061.90	1117.80	...	0.01
Index Linked	549.10	578.10	...	0.38
International	4073.30	4287.70	...	...
Managed	3995.90	4206.30	...	0.36
Nth American	1574.80	1657.70	...	...
Property	805.60	848.00	...	...

Pensions (Series 4)

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash	152.90	152.90	...	...
Equity	377.90	377.90	...	...
European	437.70	437.70	...	...
Far East	443.50	443.50	...	...
Fixed Interest	232.80	232.80	...	...
Index Linked	197.70	197.70	...	...
International	564.30	564.30	...	...
Managed	394.10	394.10	...	...
Nth American	682.70	682.70	...	...
Property	282.60	282.60	...	...
Stock Exchange	561.80	561.80	...	...

TESCO PERSONEL FINANCIAL LIFE LTD
0845 5555
PO Box 23042, Edinburgh EH3 8YG

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced Growth	403.90	403.90	+1.10	...
Intl Growth	755.00	755.00	+6.30	...
UK Growth	430.00	430.00	-1.90	...

WINDSOR LIFE ASSUR CO LTD
01952 292929
Windsor House, Telford, Shropshire
Formerly AEtna
1982 Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Cash Deposit	375.10	394.80	+0.20	...
Far East Equity	3001.40	3159.30	+81.10	...
Fixed	668.70	703.90	-0.90	...
Index-Linked Fd	602.20	633.90	+2.00	...
Managed	2091.50	2201.60	+5.80	...
N Amer Equity	3914.20	4120.20	+19.00	...
Property	548.90	577.80	+0.40	...
Special Opp	3050.20	3210.70	+33.80	...
UK Equity	2378.10	2503.20	-9.70	...

Formerly AEGON Life

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Balanced	2916.50	3086.20	+8.00	...
Fixed Interest	620.10	656.20	-0.90	...
International	3930.30	4159.00	+29.80	...
Money	452.30	478.60	+0.20	...
Property	1382.70	1463.10	+1.00	...
UK Equity	3934.70	4163.70	-16.10	...

Formerly Crown

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Life Equity Acc	6047.50	6365.80	-24.60	...
Life Fxd Int Acc	775.00	815.80	-1.10	...
Life High Inc Acc	4914.00	5172.60	-28.60	...
Life Intl Acc	4810.60	5063.80	+36.80	...
Life Inv Tst Acc	5102.50	5371.00	+14.00	...
Life Managed Acc	3662.40	3855.20	+9.80	...
Life Money Acc	540.50	568.90	+0.30	...
Life Property Acc	803.80	846.10	+0.50	...

Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Bear	77.85	81.94	-0.28	...
Bull	104.60	110.10	+0.20	...
Deposit	24.76	26.07	+0.01	...
Gilt Edged	36.19	38.10	-0.05	...
Owl	129.20	136.00	-0.50	...
Squirrel	32.74	34.47	+0.01	...
Stag	136.10	143.20	+1.50	...

Pensions

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Bear	136.40	143.60	-0.60	...
Bull	171.20	180.20	+0.60	...
Deposit	40.14	42.25	+0.02	...
Gilt Edged	57.80	60.84	-0.10	...
Owl	206.80	217.70	-1.00	...
Squirrel	53.65	56.47	+0.03	...
Stag	236.50	249.00	+3.00	...

Pre 1982 Series

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
3-Way Fund	4271.70	4271.70	+12.00	...

Gresham

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
American & Genrl	7878.20	8292.80	+38.70	...
Capital Fund	3722.20	3918.10	-15.30	...
Equity Fund	4240.30	4463.40	-17.40	...
Fixed Interest	628.50	661.60	-0.90	...
Income	4952.10	5212.70	-20.40	...
International Gth	6339.80	6673.50	+48.10	...
Japan & General	947.10	997.00	+19.40	...
Managed Bond	4678.20	4924.40	+12.80	...
Money Fund	581.50	612.10	...	...
Property Fund	1288.30	1356.10	+0.90	...
Recovery Fund	4057.10	4270.60	+45.20	...

WINTERTHUR LIFE UK LTD
01256 470707
Winterthur Way, Basingstoke,RG21 6SZ
Formerly Colonial

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity Inv Pens	13784.70	14510.30	-101.60	...
Equity Pens Cap	3096.70	3259.70	-24.90	...
Key ‡	616.00	...	+0.90	...
Managed	1789.10	1883.30	+3.20	...
Mngd Inv Pens	5059.70	5326.00	+8.90	...
Mngd Pens Cap	1138.90	1198.80	+1.20	...
Pacemaker ‡	1231.70	...	+2.10	...

ZURICH ASSURANCE LTD
0845 300 2332
UK Life Centre,Swindon SN1 1EL
Life Funds

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Equity	16540.70	17411.30	+48.10	...
Managed (1)	1453.80	1530.30	-0.20	...
Managed (2)	1104.60	1162.80	-0.20	...
Managed (3) ‡	891.30	...	+0.10	...
Mangd Gen 4	205.60	216.50	-0.10	...
Property	2117.00	2228.40	+1.40	...
Property (1)	440.50	463.70	+0.30	...
Property (2) ‡	495.70	...	+0.40	...

Pension

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Managed (1)	2170.90	2285.10	-0.50	...
Equity Acc	50280.20	52926.50	+164.00	...
Managed Acc	23921.20	25180.20	-12.60	...
Property (1)	854.60	899.60	+0.30	...
Property (2) ‡	939.00	...	+0.50	...
Property Acc	10273.10	10813.70	+4.70	...
With Profs (5) ‡	268.60	...	+0.20	...
With Profs (6) ‡	235.90	...	+0.10	...

Share Class 1 Retail

	Sell	Buy	Weekly +/-	Yld %
Managed (2) ‡	1172.30	...	-0.10	...

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	64.11	- .43	0.78	2.53
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	57.24	- .40	0.44	2.53
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.70	+ .13	0.13	0.28
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.61	+ .11	0.13	0.66
98.88	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.99	+ .07	0.13	0.95
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.68	- .19	0.15	1.88
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.57	- .17	0.16	2.17
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	72.91	- .24	0.17	2.27
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	67.08	- .28	0.19	2.44
71.23	62.87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.46	- .42	0.20	2.49
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	59.78	- .43	0.21	2.52
60.61	50.05	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	50.47	- .51	0.25	2.45
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	49.56	- .38	0.25	2.42
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	44.27	- .51	0.28	2.28
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	43.19	- .50	0.29	2.23
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	44.58	- .53	0.28	1.94
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	94.09	- .07	0.80	1.58
79.12	70.87	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	71.47	- .41	1.05	2.49
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	52.27	- .43	0.72	2.37
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	81.29	- .16	0.77	2.23
84.28	76.46	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	76.95	- .32	0.81	2.34
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.36	+ .08	1.23	0.17
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	100.05	+ .03	1.25	1.24
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	74.68	- .56	1.67	2.51
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	74.25	- .57	1.68	2.50
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.80	- .23	1.19	1.75
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.40	- .13	1.23	1.98
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.67	- .30	1.81	2.06
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	89.22	- .67	2.10	2.49
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.59	- .13	0.83	1.71
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	342.49	+ .41	1.20	0.81

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	22.31	Tr 0 ½% 61	22.51	- .31	2.22	5.51
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 ⅛% 51	56.15	- .43	0.22	2.53
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	33.53	- .38	1.86	5.75
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 ½% 53	41.66	- .41	3.60	5.81
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	40.35	- .43	3.10	5.80
33.04	27.53	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	27.66	- .37	4.07	5.34
48.44	41.88	Tr 1 ¾% 57	42.39	- .45	4.13	5.76
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	42.49	- .44	3.82	5.79
41.45	35.65	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	35.89	- .43	4.53	5.46
57.14	49.76	Tr 2 ½% 65	50.35	- .52	4.97	5.68
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 ½% 68	65.47	- .65	5.35	5.66
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	73.14	- .61	5.13	5.76
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	72.30	- .62	5.19	5.78
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	78.72	- .66	5.40	5.76
83.52	73.44	Tr 4% 60	74.26	- .68	5.39	5.74

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	81.43	- .14	0.31	4.47
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.71	- .10	0.44	4.42
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	68.82	- .30	0.91	4.98
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	77.08	- .23	1.14	4.79
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	43.72	- .40	2.00	5.70
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 ½% 47	48.72	- .46	3.08	5.74
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	56.97	- .40	2.19	5.45
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	62.40	- .36	1.80	5.28
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	71.39	- .36	2.45	5.18
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	49.94	- .45	3.50	5.75
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.69	- .18	1.21	4.63
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 ½% 45	75.59	- .53	4.63	5.65
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	91.89	- .24	3.54	4.72
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	73.82	- .49	4.40	5.63
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	87.28	- .41	4.30	5.24
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ½% 34	97.55	- .33	4.61	4.87
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	96.88	- .35	4.64	4.95
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ½% 42	88.98	- .55	5.06	5.53
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	98.17	- .24	4.33	4.61
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	95.88	- .34	4.43	4.88
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	94.03	- .38	4.52	5.05
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	89.93	- .47	4.73	5.33
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	88.55	- .50	4.80	5.41
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	82.92	- .60	5.13	5.68
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	81.19	- .63	5.23	5.72
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	98.28	- .15	4.20	4.55
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	96.60	- .25	4.27	4.73
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 ¾% 30	101.18	- .15	4.69	4.44
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	98.06	- .38	4.84	5.02
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 ¾% 38	95.35	- .47	4.98	5.27
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.65	- .11	4.39	4.48
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	90.49	- .49	4.83	5.38
100.37	100.09	Tr 4 ⅝% 32	99.94	- .19	4.63	4.64
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	95.77	- .42	4.83	5.15
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	98.31	- .41	4.96	5.09
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 ¼% 41	98.18	- .54	5.35	5.43
105.44	93.20	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	94.50	- .76	5.69	5.77

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 ½% 29	91.23	- .03	0.55	4.31
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.47	+ ...	0.13	4.08
99.43	96.16	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.41	+ .03	0.38	3.65
91.00	0.01	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.67	- .07	0.98	4.39
97.43	95.29	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.37	+ .02	1.28	4.20
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.50	- .04	1.72	4.29
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.87	- .07	4.05	4.44
101.39	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	100.00	- .01	4.25	4.24
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛% 29	99.15	- .08	4.16	4.44
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ¼% 27	100.03	+ ...	4.12	4.01
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	100.05	- .03	4.37	4.34
107.20	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.77	- .09	5.78	4.26

* maturities as having a 3-month indexation lag and which trade on a real clean price basis, excluding inflation adjustment charge

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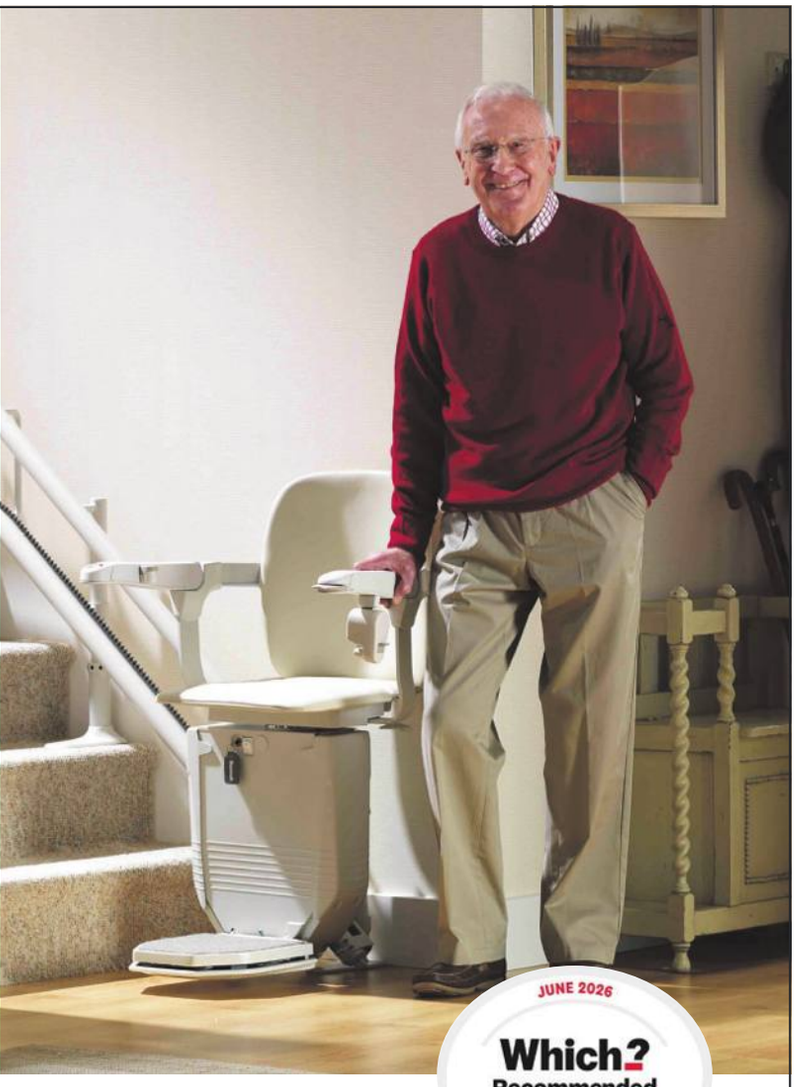

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Hope Rehab Thailand: *journey to recovery*

At Hope, the aim is to provide affordable and quality care to people struggling with addiction. It offers a calm, supportive environment where individuals can explore their issues, including looking at and identifying unhelpful thought patterns and behaviours.When some people pick up alcohol or drugs, it is because they believe it offers a solution; an escape from a discomfort deep inside. However, this can quickly become a problem.

Building a positive belief system

Hope offers a chance to look at the deep discomfort within and learn new and healthier ways to cope. The program also focuses on building self-esteem and self-worth that comes from purpose and meaning in life, instead of reward-seeking behaviour as with substance misuse.

The staff at Hope often get asked about their success rate, and while they do their best to answer, ultimately they believe that it's down to the motivation of the client coming in. They can offer the best program in the world, but it's the client who will be doing the work. They can provide support, guidance and tools to support recovery, but it is the client's commitment and willingness that are essential.

Discovering healthier coping mechanisms

A member of the team will complete a telephone assessment with every incoming client so they know they're ready. Clients at Hope want to change; they are willing and open to the process. The Hope team doesn't expect clients to be happy every second of the day, but do ask that they work at this and learn from difficulties and challenges. There will be days where clients may think, *'this is amazing, why didn't I do it sooner?'*. And there will be days where they may be triggered in the group or receive news from home. These are what the Hope team calls *'Gift Days'*—days when clients get to use these triggers and discomfort to notice their reactions and see what needs to change. With Hope's help, clients can learn how to change so they no longer have to rely on substances.

Commitment to change

Staff at Hope are driven by a passion to help others who are struggling and have made it their lifetime mission. Start your recovery with the help of a supportive team of experts who care. **Recovery starts with Hope.** Hope reflects the attitude the team has on behalf of all its clients until they have it for themselves. Hope is important to instill in clients from the beginning. Hope is the seed of a positive belief system that will start to grow. Hope's counsellors put a great emphasis on developing a positive belief system in order to make sustainable changes.

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Farnborough GU14 7PG
Hendon NW4 4UB
Henley-on-Thames RG9 1AG
Ipswich IP3 9QJ
Letchworth SG6 1LJ
Maidstone ME15 6RQ
Milton Keynes MK12 6HS
Norwich NR6 6EP
Orpington BR6 0JW
Oxford OX2 0HF
Rayleigh SS6 7LF
Romford RM11 1PZ
NEW - Lakeside/Thurrock RM20 1WN
Tolworth KT6 7BF
NEW - Tunbridge Wells TN2 3BF

South Coast

Brighton & Hove BN3 7BA
Poole/Bournemouth BH12 1DA
Southampton SO30 4FN
St. Leonards-on-Sea TN38 0DX

South West / Wales

Bath BA2 2RX
Bristol BS10 6PZ
Cardiff CF23 9XE
Cheltenham GL51 9RR
Exeter EX2 8NW
Plymouth PL7 4JN
Swindon SN3 4NS
Taunton TA1 5NF
Truro TR4 8HS

Midlands

Brierley Hill DY5 1AJ
Coventry CV3 2SB
Henley-in-Arden B95 5BA
Lichfield WS13 6UY
Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 9ED
Nottingham NG9 3JA
Peterborough PE2 7BX
Shrewsbury SY1 4NU
Solihull B90 3BL
Wellingborough NN8 2DP

North West

HSL at LIVHOME Aintree L9 5AN
Blackpool FY3 7AT
Burnley BB11 1LE
Chester CH1 4QG
Formby L37 4AQ
NEW - Preston PR1 4HZ
Prestwich M25 1AX
Stockport SK1 2BU
Warrington WA2 8TW

North East / Yorkshire

Dewsbury WF13 2DU
Guiseley LS20 8LZ
Hull HU6 7PL
Lincoln LN5 8QJ
Newcastle upon Tyne NE21 5ST
Rotherham S66 2TP
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 2NH
York YO30 4WZ

Scotland

Bathgate EH48 2AG
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HSL at Sterling Home:
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Today Rain or showers in northern Scotland, otherwise mainly dry with sunny spells. Max 30C (86F), min 8C (46F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr* yesterday
Aberdeen	19	C	0.0	4.4
Aberporth	20	C	0.0	11.6
Anglesey	18	D	0.0	10.6
Aviemore	17	C	8.2	0.7
Barnstaple	22	D	0.0	☆☆
Bedford	31	S	0.0	☆☆
Belfast	19	C	0.0	3.2
Birmingham	28	S	0.0	☆☆
Bournemouth	30	S	0.0	13.2
Bridlington	26	S	0.0	☆☆
Bristol	26	S	0.0	13.0
Camborne	22	B	0.0	5.4
Cardiff	21	D	☆☆	12.1
Edinburgh	19	C	3.0	5.6
Eskdalemuir	20	PC	0.6	9.1
Glasgow	17	C	1.4	4.8
Hereford	28	S	0.0	☆☆
Herstmonceux	32	PC	0.0	11.0
Ipswich	31	S	0.0	13.6
Isle of Man	20	S	0.0	9.4
Isle of Wight	32	S	0.0	☆☆
Jersey	24	S	0.0	12.8
Keswick	22	PC	0.0	☆☆
Kinloss	17	☆☆	8.6	0.8
Leeds	25	PC	0.0	☆☆
Lerwick	14	S	13.2	0.1
Leuchars	23	PC	1.6	7.1
Lincoln	29	S	0.0	12.3
Liverpool	21	C	0.0	☆☆
London	32	S	0.0	12.8
Lyneham	28	S	0.0	13.0
Manchester	26	C	0.0	10.5
Margate	29	S	0.0	13.8
Milford Haven	22	C	0.2	☆☆
Newcastle	24	B	0.0	☆☆
Nottingham	29	S	0.0	10.6
Orkney	15	C	17.8	☆☆
Oxford	30	C	0.0	☆☆
Plymouth	25	PC	0.0	☆☆
Portland	24	C	0.0	☆☆
Scilly, St Mary's	20	R	0.0	☆☆
Shoreham	32	S	0.0	12.7
Shrewsbury	26	C	0.0	10.3
Snowdonia	21	C	0.0	☆☆
Southend	30	S	0.0	13.6
South Uist	16	C	0.6	☆☆
Stornoway	17	C	0.6	1.2
Tiree	16	R	3.0	0.0
Whitehaven	20	D	0.0	10.7
Wick	☆☆	C	5.4	☆☆
Yeovilton	26	S	0.0	13.0

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	34	S	Madeira	28	PC
Amsterdam	34	S	Madrid	34	S
Athens	28	PC	Malaga	30	PC
Auckland	15	PC	Mallorca	34	PC
Bahrain	42	S	Malta	33	PC
Bangkok	32	B	Melbourne	15	DU
Barbados	31	PC	Mexico City	26	B
Barcelona	33	PC	Miami	32	☆☆
Beijing	31	PC	Milan	33	S
Beirut	☆☆	☆☆	Mombasa	29	PC
Belgrade	30	S	Montreal	24	PC
Berlin	30	S	Moscow	17	PC
Bermuda	30	B	Mumbai	31	☆☆
Bordeaux	34	S	Munich	30	S
Brussels	35	S	Nairobi	24	PC
Bucharest	28	S	Naples	36	S
Budapest	28	S	New Orleans	33	PC
Buenos Aires	10	C	New York	28	B
Cairo	35	PC	Nice	31	PC
Calcutta	31	☆☆	Nicosia	34	PC
Canberra	8	DU	Oslo	21	S
Cape Town	15	B	Paris	38	S
Chicago	24	R	Perth	21	S
Copenhagen	23	PC	Prague	26	S
Corfu	35	PC	Reykjavik	14	PC
Delhi	30	M	Riga	23	S
Dubai	44	PC	Rio de Janeiro	28	PC
Dublin	21	PC	Riyadh	45	S
Faro	28	S	Rome	35	S
Florence	37	S	San Francisco	21	B
Frankfurt	35	S	Santiago	17	B
Geneva	34	SH	São Paulo	28	S
Gibraltar	27	PC	Seoul	29	S
Helsinki	19	PC	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	27	SH	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	☆☆	☆☆	St Petersburg	19	PC
Istanbul	28	B	Stockholm	23	S
Jerusalem	32	B	Sydney	19	S
Johannesburg	14	PC	Tel Aviv	32	B
Kuala Lumpur	32	PC	Tenerife	30	S
Kyiv	☆☆	☆☆	Tokyo	28	B
Lanzarote	30	PC	Vancouver	22	PC
Las Palmas	27	PC	Venice	31	S
Lima	22	C	Vienna	28	S
Lisbon	26	PC	Warsaw	25	S
Los Angeles	25	B	Washington	31	PC
Luxor	40	S	Zurich	33	S

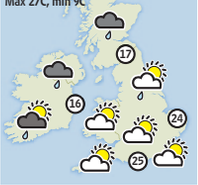
Five days ahead

Becoming more changeable with the risk of showers for many places

Tomorrow

Cloud and rain will spread eastwards across parts of Ireland and Scotland, but elsewhere it will be dry with sunny spells and occasional showers.

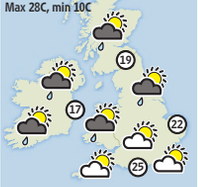
Max 27C, min 9C



Monday

Cloudy with rain across northern Britain and Ireland, persistent and heavy in western areas. Warm with sunny spells in southern areas.

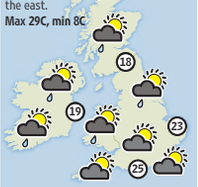
Max 28C, min 10C



Tuesday

A changeable day with scattered showers, perhaps merging to a longer spell of rain in central areas. Some sunny periods though, especially in the east.

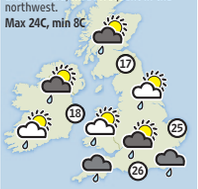
Max 29C, min 8C



Wednesday

A band of rain will slide eastwards across southern Britain. Further north there will be a mixture of sunny spells and showers, most frequent in the northwest.

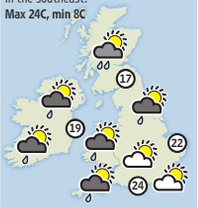
Max 24C, min 8C



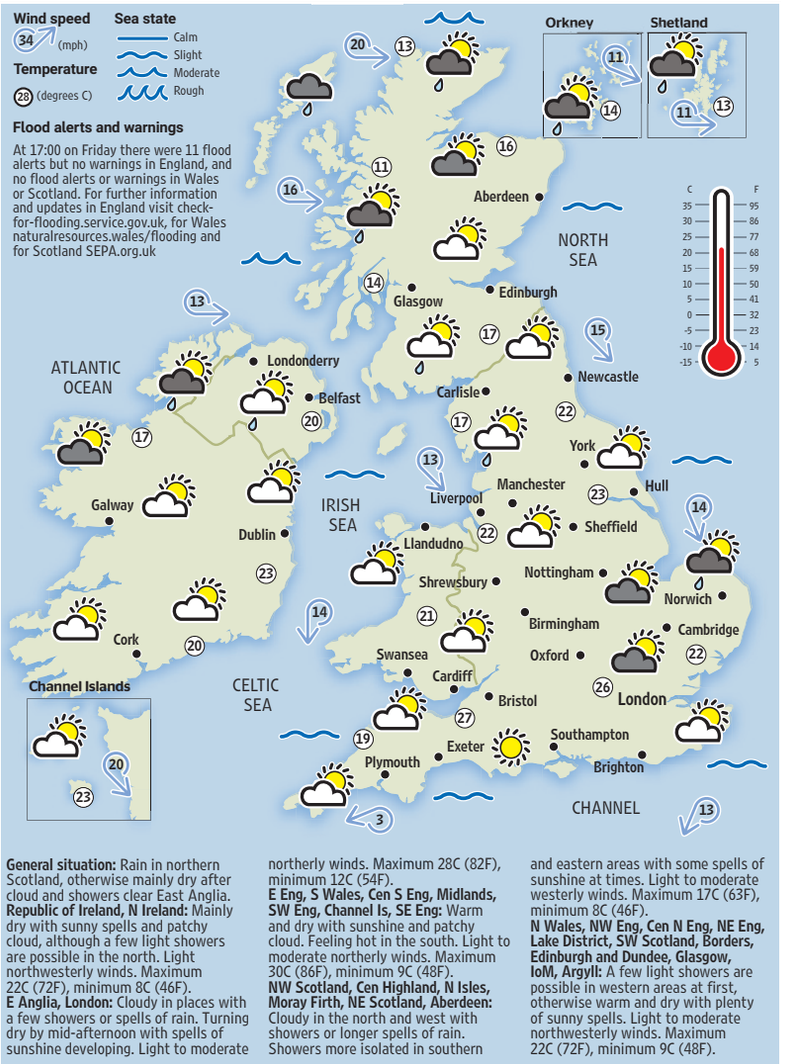
Thursday

Sunshine and a scattering of showers, mainly in the northwest. Staying dry in the southeast.

Max 24C, min 8C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

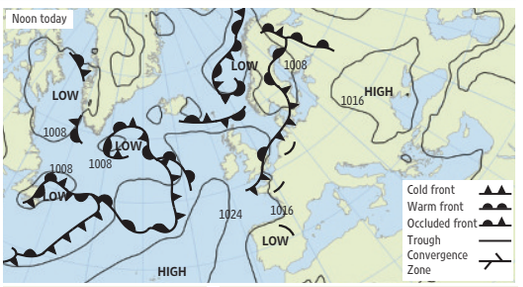


General situation: Rain in northern Scotland, otherwise mainly dry after cloud and showers clear East Anglia.
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Mainly dry with sunny spells and patchy cloud, although a few light showers are possible in the north. Light northwesterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 8C (46F).
E Anglia, London: Cloudy in places with a few showers or spells of rain. Turning dry by mid-afternoon with spells of sunshine developing. Light to moderate northerly winds. Maximum 28C (82F), minimum 12C (54F).
E Eng, S Wales, Cen S Eng, Midlands, SW Eng, Channel Is, SE Eng: Warm and dry with sunshine and patchy cloud. Feeling hot in the south. Light to moderate northerly winds. Maximum 30C (86F), minimum 9C (48F).
NW Scotland, Cen Highland, N Isles, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Aberdeen: Cloudy in the north and west with showers or longer spells of rain. Showers more isolated in southern and eastern areas with some spells of sunshine at times. Light to moderate westerly winds. Maximum 17C (63F), minimum 8C (46F).
N Wales, NW Eng, Cen N Eng, NE Eng, Lake District, SW Scotland, Borders, Edinburgh and Dundee, Glasgow, IoM, Argyll: A few light showers are possible in western areas at first, otherwise warm and dry with plenty of sunny spells. Light to moderate northwesterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 9C (48F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	03:35	4.6	16:12	4.2
Avonmouth	09:57	13.6	22:12	13.8
Belfast	01:19	3.8	13:52	3.2
Cardiff	09:46	12.5	22:01	12.8
Devonport	08:34	5.4	20:43	5.7
Dover	01:34	6.7	13:46	7.0
Dublin	01:37	4.3	14:11	3.9
Falmouth	07:56	5.2	20:09	5.4
Greenock	02:40	3.7	15:31	3.2
Harwich	02:08	4.2	14:22	4.2
Holyhead	--:--	--	12:58	5.5
Hull	08:41	8.0	21:19	7.5
Leith	04:55	5.9	17:23	5.6
Liverpool	01:23	9.8	13:48	9.4
London Bridge	04:23	7.3	16:40	7.2
Lowestoft	11:48	2.8	--:--	--
Milford Haven	08:50	7.2	21:07	7.4
Morecambe	01:33	10.0	13:58	9.5
Newhaven	01:28	6.8	13:55	6.9
Newquay	07:41	7.1	19:58	7.3
Oban	08:21	3.9	20:28	4.1
Penzance	07:12	5.5	19:30	5.7
Portsmouth	01:30	4.7	14:17	4.8
Shoreham	01:40	6.4	14:06	6.6
Southampton	01:01	4.5	13:37	4.6
Swansea	09:00	9.6	21:14	9.8
Tees	06:03	5.8	18:37	5.5
Weymouth	09:48	2.2	21:49	2.4



Synoptic situation

A front slowly clears across southeastern Britain, with cloud and a few showers lingering through this morning, before then clearing during the afternoon. An occluded front brings cloud and outbreaks of showery rain across northern Scotland. Meanwhile a ridge of high pressure builds from the southwest, bringing plenty of dry and bright weather.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Frittenden, Kent, 35.8C
Coldest: Aonach Mor, 7.0C
Wettest: Kirkwall, Orkney, 17.8mm
Sunniest: Manston, 13.8hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.45
Sun sets: 20.23
Moon rises: 09.13
Moon sets: 21.09
First quarter: August 20

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:20-05:07
Belfast	21:26-05:31
Birmingham	21:03-05:22
Cardiff	21:05-05:30
Exeter	21:05-05:33
Glasgow	21:24-05:20
Liverpool	21:10-05:23
London	20:53-05:17
Manchester	21:07-05:20
Newcastle	21:10-05:13
Norwich	20:51-05:09
Penzance	21:11-05:43
Sheffield	21:04-05:17

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

Farmers have had a tough time in this summer's heat and drought, but exotic crops have thrived. The English Olive Company near Spalding, Lincolnshire, grows 18,000 olive trees, the most northerly commercial olive grove in the world and last year produced its first commercial extra virgin olive oil. In Essex, Peter Thompson has a commercial olive grove, and also grows figs and is trialling varieties of lemons grown outdoors.

Sunflowers also thrive in hot sunshine and this summer fields of the bright yellow flowerheads looked like a Van Gogh painting in the south of France, growing to 2m even without irrigation. The UK imports about 60,000 tonnes of sunflower seeds each year for bird feed, worth about £50 million, but now the UK has about 400 hectares of sunflowers, producing about 1,000 tonnes of seed.

The fibre from the stems can be used to make paper and fine-quality cloth. Historically, sunflowers used to be grown south of a line from the Bristol Channel to the Wash but the cultivation area is expanding northwards as temperatures rise.

Hemp is another crop that does well in hot, dry conditions. The Anglo-Saxons used hemp fibres for making clothes before the Tudors grew the crop to make ropes and sails for the Royal Navy. "Hemp for Victory" was a campaign in the Second World War to use hemp for ropes, parachute cords and much else. Today it is used for making textiles, paper, house insulation and plasterboard, and can be used in cosmetics and as a vegetable oil.

The plant also helps the health of soils and locks away carbon dioxide from the atmosphere at twice the rate of trees. It needs no fertiliser, herbicides, pesticides or irrigation, but growers need a licence to ensure it cannot be used as an illegal drug.

Hemp has the fastest growth rate of any annual plant crop in the UK, reaching up to 4m, and it is drought-tolerant with a deep and extensive root system. About 800 hectares of hemp are grown in the UK, but most hemp is imported from France.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

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A snapshot of the Hungarian capital's most historic sights, with ample time to explore the lesser-known treasures of the blue Danube

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Register

Obituaries

Michael Atkinson

Ambassador in Bucharest during the dramatic downfall of Ceausescu

When Michael Atkinson was considering his next ambassadorial posting in the late 1980s, a spell in the Caribbean was one option. He believed, however, that another vacancy, in Bucharest, would prove more interesting. He can have had little idea how "interesting" it would actually be, as he and his family became caught up in the drama of revolution against the communist dictator of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu.

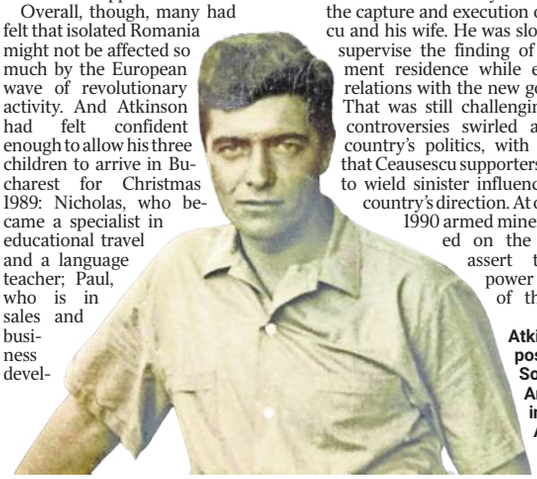
Atkinson had been warned about the nature of his new country's ruler when he went to "kiss hands" with Queen Elizabeth after his appointment. The Queen had been obliged to host Ceausescu and his equally notorious wife, Elena, for a state visit in 1978. They had been, the Queen confided, her worst official guests, unable to curb their kleptomanic instincts as they helped themselves to items from royal residences.

While the dictator and his family enriched themselves rapaciously, their population was left in ever-worsening poverty. Atkinson's wife, Veronica, a Paraguayan and linguist whom he had met while based in Argentina, noticed after they arrived in Romania that shop windows were "empty. No jars of anything. No fresh food."

Atkinson remembered hearing Ceausescu trot out his ludicrous denials of the dire shortages, maintaining that "the Romanian population, per capita, consumed more meat than in many advanced west European countries". Asked to explain why none could be seen in the shops, he said: "Well, in West Germany I'm sure you can see the shops full of meat but many of the people can't afford to buy it."

By late 1989, however, the dictator's grip on power was beginning to weaken. Atkinson noticed that crowds were gathering around the offices of a Bulgarian airline in Bucharest as it broadcast Bulgarian TV news. Unlike the heavily censored local TV, it was reporting the dramatic events as communist regimes elsewhere in Europe were overthrown. Atkinson noted that Ceausescu, who had boasted that political change in Romania was "as likely as pears growing on poplar trees", rushed back from a visit to East Berlin in the middle of the night and went straight to a food market, desperately trying to ensure better supplies.

Overall, though, many had felt that isolated Romania might not be affected so much by the European wave of revolutionary activity. And Atkinson had felt confident enough to allow his three children to arrive in Bucharest for Christmas 1989: Nicholas, who became a specialist in educational travel and a language teacher; Paul, who is in sales and business development; and Carina, later an author and Chinese medicine educationalist.



Atkinson had posts in South America including Argentina in his thirties

When the revolution did begin to emerge in the capital, all at first seemed to the family exciting and celebratory. After Ceausescu was humiliated by a jeering crowd, he fled with his wife, and Atkinson was "impressed by the quiet, peaceful mood in the streets. There was no sign of any looting, except that bookshop windows had been broken and propaganda tracts, especially volumes ghost-written for Ceausescu, were in piles burning on the street."

However, some of the dictator's most ruthless supporters were not prepared to give up without a fight. Atkinson was working in the embassy when "Veronica telephoned to say there were people with staves milling about near the [ambassador's] residence". About 2,000 members of the Securitate secret police were attempting to take control of the main TV station nearby.

Atkinson's wife and children found themselves caught up in fighting as revolutionaries responded. At one point Securitate agents entered their home while they hid in a basement, wondering whether they could use bottles of Pimm's and soft drinks as defensive weapons.

"I was trapped in the office where I stayed all night trying to find out what was happening in the city and round the TV station," Atkinson recalled. "The telephone to the residence was cut and the only later news was from the French military attaché who reported that the situation there 'could hardly be worse'. I could only wait and pray."

Eventually, with the help of German and US diplomats, his family did escape and enjoy protection. When they returned home a few days later it was badly damaged, with personal possessions lost. "There had been some looting, and a framed picture of myself with Ceausescu at the presentation of my credentials had been torn in half and his side of the photograph had disappeared."

The family had meanwhile helped to destroy secret documents at the British embassy before its temporary closure. Shortly before Christmas his wife and children were able to leave Romania via Bulgaria.

Atkinson watched on as the revolution reached its bloody conclusion with the capture and execution of Ceausescu and his wife. He was slowly able to supervise the finding of a replacement residence while establishing relations with the new government. That was still challenging work as controversies swirled around the country's politics, with allegations that Ceausescu supporters continued to wield sinister influence over the country's direction. At one point in 1990 armed miners descended on the capital to assert their own power in defence of the government, ransacking the building next to the new British embassy residence.

Atkinson was never easily intimidated. His ability to overcome adversity had been formed early. He was born in 1932, the son of an artist who had been severely wounded in the First World War and took his own life while Atkinson was a boy. His mother died in 1938 from pneumonia and Atkinson was brought up by an uncle and aunt in Coulsdon to the south of London.

He was educated at the Purley County School for Boys, where he was influenced by a German teacher and went on a school exchange to Germany. He then came second from top of the Foreign Office entry exams in 1950. After two years of National Service in the army, which included studying French and German at Oxford University, he entered the diplomatic service.

Atkinson's first posting abroad was as third secretary at Vientiane in Laos where he remembered being pressed into service as an emergency chauffeur for the ambassador despite never having driven. He made the journey by only using the Bentley's second gear.

Subsequent postings included Buenos Aires, British Honduras, Madrid, Rome, Budapest and Beijing. He also worked on such delicate and complex issues as the status of the Falkland Islands, the ending of the "cod wars" with Iceland and preparation for the handing over of Hong Kong to China.

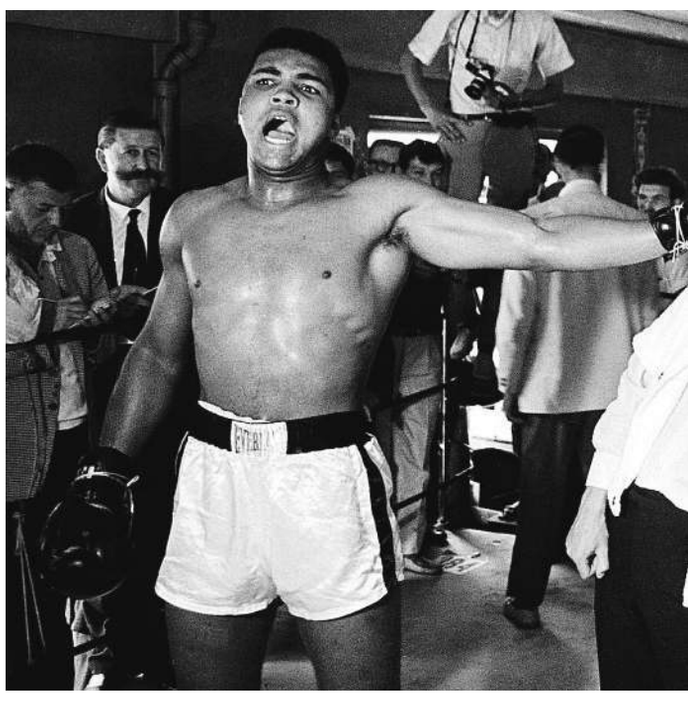
Securitate agents entered their home while the family hid in a basement

His first ambassadorial post was in Ecuador from 1985 to 1989, which he described as "four rather pleasant years, disturbed by the occasional coup attempt, by rioting students next to the residence, and once by a 6.3 Richter scale earthquake". He also faced the challenge of increasingly restricted Foreign Office spending. He managed, however, to persuade the British government of the need for a new official car after the visiting governor of the Bank of England was left stranded when the ageing embassy Jaguar broke down. Atkinson sent his bosses a photo of the governor awaiting rescue asleep next to the old car, and approval for a new vehicle followed.

After retirement on leaving Bucharest in 1992 he had more time for charitable work, including women's education and schools in Africa. One charity in Malawi has set up a legacy award, the Atkinson prize, for top scholars.

When he retired, it was noted that his career of more than 40 years had spanned a huge change in diplomacy and the role Britain sought to play in the world. His work had grappled with such change and its revolutionary moments. However much the context or location might have varied, Atkinson's qualities of a can-do attitude, courage, belief in the power of good human relations, and care for family and staff had been unchanging.

Michael Atkinson CMG was born on April 11, 1932. He died on April 24, 2026, aged 94



Chris Smith

Award-winning Sunday Times photographer who documented the sheer joy and pain of sport

When most of the world's top sports photographers were thronged around the finishing line for the men's 100m final at the Moscow Olympics in 1980, Chris Smith was at the other end of the track hidden from sight.

"The track in Moscow had a pit around it, which was great for photographers because you could get down to ground level," said The Sunday Times snapper who won the Sports Photographer of the Year Award four times and the Sports Picture of the Year Award twice. "I thought, 'I don't want to go to the finish, everybody's at the finish', and often as you frame head-on, the athletes dip going into the finish so you often get the top of a head." Smith's shot of Great Britain's gold medallist Allan Wells getting a "flyer" as one of the eight men in profile straining every sinew as they rise out of their blocks on the sound of the gun, exemplified his reverse psychology in more than 40 years of acclaimed sports photography.

Six years later another of his great sporting portraits was a poignant study of impending defeat. The featherweight world champion boxer Barry McGuigan was sitting on his chair at the end of the 14th round of his title defence against Steve Cruz in 1986 at the

'If I'm in a silly mood, she matches it'
Marriages and engagements
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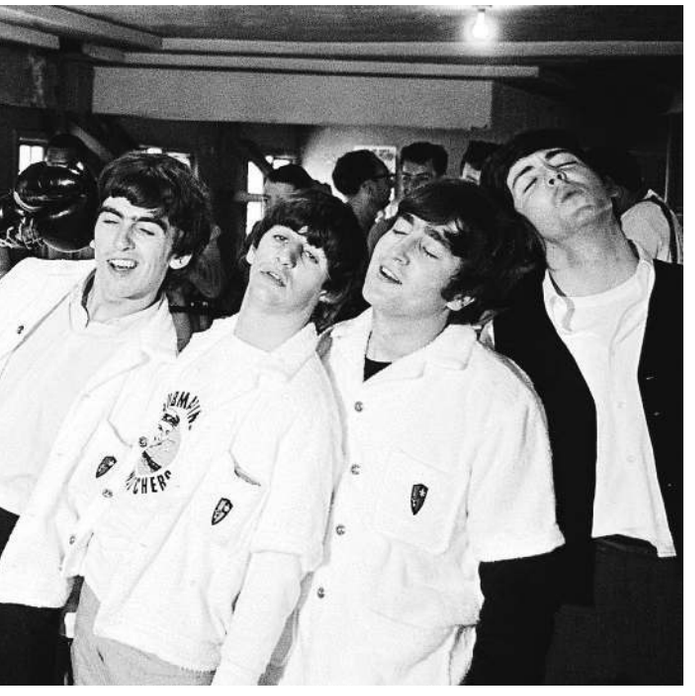
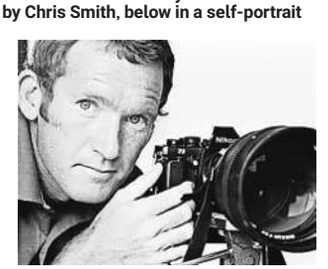
CHRIS SMITH/TIMES NEWSPAPERS LTD, POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES



Beach racing at Laytown, near Dublin, in 1977 and Cassius Clay with the Beatles in Miami, Florida, in 1964, photos taken by Chris Smith, below in a self-portrait



Caesars Palace outdoor arena. It was 44C. "You couldn't move without oozing sweat, and Barry of course comes from Clones in Ireland so he's certainly not used to those temperatures .... He was just out of his element in that fight, poor man.

"Coming back from the 13th round I was in the opposite corner and spotted — between the corner men moving around trying to sharpen him up — this face, this expression. I put on a 180mm [lens] for when he finished the 14th round and he was sitting in the corner. The expression, or lack of expression, in his eyes is just heartbreaking. He finished up going to hospital because he was so dehydrated. I met him later on and he called it 'The picture of me with the dead eyes', which it was."

Christopher Smith was born in Hartlepool, Co Durham, in 1937 to Thomas Smith, who worked in the town's docks, and Jennie (née Vale). He joined the Hartlepool Mail as a trainee photographer at the age of 16. Most of the time he was mixing chemicals for the darkroom, printing and sweeping the floor. On rare occasions he would venture out with his 1912 Zeiss plate camera. "It was an industrial town with docks, trawlers coming in and out, steelworks, so I could wander around the docks taking interesting pictures." His pictures began to feature in the paper when the established staff photographers sent him to cover local football matches because they "didn't like getting wet on a Saturday".

After completing two years' National Service in the Grenadier Guards, Smith moved to the capital to try to make it on Fleet Street and joined The Daily Herald in 1959. He had a natural instinct for sniffing out good picture opportunities. In 1960, in the days before heavy security and paparazzi in Britain, he wandered into Westminster Abbey. His picture of Princess Margaret and Antony Armstrong-Jones rehearsing their wedding vows would win the News Photographer of the Year award.

In 1964 Smith persuaded the picture editor to send him to the US to photograph the Beatles on their first tour there. In Miami, where the Fab Four were performing, Smith quickly decided that he could get two great picture stories for the price of one and knocked on the door of the gym where Cassius Clay (later Muhammad Ali) was training for his world title fight with Sonny Liston. Smith had already built a rapport with Clay when the Beatles walked in. Quickly recovering from his astonishment, he arranged a photograph of Clay at his clownish, expressive best extending his gloved left hand. On the other side of the glove are four Beatle heads with their eyes closed rocking back in mock pain. Smith thought the picture "corny" but Terry O'Neill, who had arrived with the Beatles, said: "Well, you may say it's a corny picture but out of all those that have been taken that's the best one."

His reward for such scoops was to be sent on other American adventures, which included photographing the writer Truman Capote in the Arizona desert. After the shoot, Capote invited Smith to lunch in New York, where the locals assumed that the devilishly handsome and happily married Smith was his boyfriend. He is survived by his wife, Sylvia (née Phillipson), a former BOAC air hostess, and by their sons, Dan and Josh.

Smith joined The Observer in 1970, where he inspired one of the kinder asides from the normally caustic sportswriter Hugh McIlvanney: "When you are working with Smithy you are just writing a 1,000-word caption."

Yet in six years at The Observer and 24 years that followed as chief sports photographer at The Sunday Times, Smith was proud of the fact that his pictures often did not need one. "If you look at Henri Cartier-Bresson's work, you don't need a caption for those pictures — they tell you everything," he said. "Really good pictures don't need many words, or any words at all."

Smith put his life in his hands before the European Cup final between Liverpool and Roma in May 1984 in a febrile atmosphere at the Olympic stadium in Rome. Undeterred, he jumped over the barriers and straight into the bear pit where the fiercest Italian ultras were setting off flares and giving fascist salutes. Amid all the aggression there is an innocence in the face of the main ultra in the composition who is wielding a flare. Smith cited it as his favourite photo. "I come back to it time and again and it doesn't tire, which I guess is a sign of a photograph that ticks all the boxes."

Decades later, the ultra in the image contacted Smith to say that he did not attend football matches any more, but looked after his grandchildren.

Chris Smith, sports photographer, was born on December 27, 1937. He died on June 29, 2026, aged 88

Ronnie Le Drew

Puppeteer who operated Zippy and later wrote a memoir about lewd goings-on behind the scenes

As professional volte-faces go, debt collecting to puppeteering possibly the campest character in children's television takes some beating. But that was the move Ronnie Le Drew made in 1974 when he became the operator of Zippy from *Rainbow*. For the next 18 years he delighted a generation of children by animating the yapping yellow creature with "stoned eyes" and a rugby ball-shaped head in the ITV series.

In each episode, the presenter Geoffrey Hayes (obituary, October 5, 2018) would institute a game or an activity for the surreal little troupe under his care that included a lugubrious and distinctly soppy pink furry hippo called George, who took his place beside Zippy on the counter, and a naive and overly enthusiastic bear called Bungle.

In most episodes Zippy would behave like a spoilt child demanding the centre of attention until Hayes would zip up his mouth. Only when Zippy was prepared to apologise would it be opened again. Staccato movements from the excitable Zippy were expertly operated from beneath the counter by Le Drew, whose credits also included *The Sooty Show* and Jim Henson films such as *Labyrinth* in which he operated a goblin in close proximity to Jareth, King of Goblins, played by his hero, David Bowie.

Ronnie Le Drew was born one of twins in Toronto, Canada, in 1947 to Leslie Le Drew, a teacher, and Edna (née Brooker), a shop assistant. The family moved to a council flat in Stockwell, south London, when Ronnie and his twin sister, Bonnie, were three. After his parents' separation, Ronnie found solace in the make-believe world of puppets, falling in love with the art by watching *Muffin the Mule*.

He began to devise his own shows using a cardboard theatre from Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop in Covent Garden and was marionette to three wooden Pelham puppets, performing his own shows on the steps of his council block and embarrassing his father who dismissed his efforts as "dolly waggling". Undeterred, Le Drew started attending meetings of the British Puppet Guild, but was put off by "men with white beards being terribly serious".

His dream was restored by attending a performance of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* at the Little Angel Theatre in Islington, north London. Aged 15, he was given permission to leave Priory Grove school to take up an eight-month apprenticeship to the theatre's master puppeteer, John Wright. "There I was introduced to puppet theatre — all the different types of puppet, the string puppets, the glove puppets, the rod puppets, the shadow puppets and the mixtures of all of those and that was what gave me the insight to what I really wanted to do. From then on, I was going to be a puppeteer."

He began to do occasional television work, but not enough to make a living until *Rainbow*. The programme launched in 1972 as Britain's answer to *Sesame Street*. Le Drew would assume a sitting position beneath a counter with a TV monitor wedged between his knees that showed the action up above. Meanwhile, Zippy was voiced by Roy Skelton, a doyen of strange television voices who had to remember not to break into Dalek and sat in a nearby glass booth that soon filled up with the smoke from his ubiquitous cigar.

Puppeteer and voice actor developed such an instinctive understanding that they could synchronise improvisations from their respective positions until Zippy seemed to take on a life of his own.

Le Drew would remain on the show until it was cancelled amid considerable rancour in 1992. In the years after *Rainbow*, while Hayes was reduced to stacking supermarket shelves, Le Drew could still fall back on his puppeteering expertise, from providing the giant hand for the National Lottery's "It Could Be You" advertising campaign to the initial motion-capture movements for the animation of the candlestick Lumière in Disney's live-action remake of *Beauty and the Beast*. And of course Zippy was brought out again for special occasions, such as *Children in Need*, *The Weakest Link* and *The X-Factor*, while Le Drew was part of a high-budget touring production of *Doctor Dolittle*, operating a parrot voiced by Julie Andrews.

In 1983 Le Drew married Caroline Astell-Burt, with whom he founded the London School of Puppetry. They later separated. He is survived by their children, John and Liz.

His 2019 memoir *Zippy and Me: My Life Inside Britain's Most Infamous Puppet* made headlines for its recollections of lewd behaviour behind the scenes at *Rainbow*. Among his claims were that Jane, who performed songs on the show with Rod and Freddy, was nicknamed "Miss Whiplash" because she would open her coat to reveal a leather S&M outfit and would ask Zippy to "play with her maracas".

He also recounted a visit to Thames Television by an archbishop, who was shown on to the *Rainbow* set only to find Zippy and George *in flagrante* on the counter amid much sniggering behind the scenes. *Rainbow*'s crew would turn up drunk to rehearsals and Hayes was reportedly not enamoured with Zippy, Bungle and George because they received more fan mail than him.

Le Drew continued to perform at the Little Angel Theatre and for the past ten years was president of the British Puppet Guild, which said in a statement: "He attended nearly every event, whether it be online or in person, often performing when asked and always willing to chat, tell stories and entertain in whatever way he could."

Ronnie Le Drew, puppeteer, was born on October 23, 1947. He died after a short illness on July 27, 2026, aged 78

Readers' Lives

Marriages and engagements

‘If I’m in a silly mood, she matches it’

Brooke Nicholson, 30, and **Christopher Short**, 28, both actors, were married on July 13, 2026, at Millbridge Court, in Farnham, Surrey

SARAH LEGGE

Christopher and Brooke, both actors, gave guests bubbles instead of confetti. They will take his stage name, Wareham

After Christopher proposed to Brooke on one knee at the top of the Empire State Building, the security guard congratulated them and then completed another lap of the building. On his return, Brooke was proposing on one knee. “Congratulations. Again!” he said.

Brooke says it is the feminist in her that made her want to propose. It was 2024 and they were performing in the same play, *Our American Queen*, in New York. Christopher was cast as her unrequited lover. They each secretly chose a ring for the other and unknowingly picked them up on the same day and showed them off separately in the male and female dressing rooms.

The couple met via a group Zoom call before starting at Guildford School of Acting (GSA) in Surrey in 2021. In person, she was a lot shorter (5ft 1.5in) than he had imagined. “I do give very tall vibes on Zoom,” she says. She liked him straight away. He remembers her turning up to their first class on a skateboard. She had never been on a skateboard, and has dyspraxia, but it was her dream entrance.

For their initial classes, during the pandemic, they had to stay two metres apart. “They taped boxes in all of the studios and we couldn’t leave our box,” he says. “Drama school is already weird and that just made it an extra level of weird. In shows, we had to contrive a reason to wipe down the props on stage during performances.”

Christopher would send Brooke videos of him doing card tricks and they would go on long-distance walks, talking for hours. “I felt like I always knew him,” she says. “I felt safe and comfortable.” She grew up in Crawley in West Sussex and has a drama and theatre arts degree from Goldsmiths, University of London. “Brooke is kind, patient and generous with her time and effort,” he says.

Christopher, whose parents separated when he was 12, was raised in Burnham, Buckinghamshire, and the New Forest. He was a chorister at the Chapel of All Saints in the grounds of Royal Lodge, in Windsor Great Park, where the late Queen was a regular. He has an MA in physics from the University of Bath, where he spent most of his time with the drama society. They became a couple after three weeks at GSA. When a teacher advised their class never to date an actor, they felt everyone’s eyes on them. They left their graduation early because they were cast as twins, Viola and Sebastian, in a production of *Twelfth Night* on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour, in Dorset, in 2022.

In 2023, they moved into a studio flat in Pimlico, central London, that had originally belonged to Christopher’s paternal grandmother. “If one of us is in a silly mood, the other matches that rather than contradicts it,” he says.

She plays the piano and enjoys making things. He hosts a podcast, *Fumbling For Lines*, based around the role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons. Last year, they bought a flat in Wandsworth, south London.

“We are really good communicators,” she says. “I’m grateful to have someone who understands the challenges we’ve had as actors with Covid, Brexit and now AI. Christopher lights up a room and his smile feels like home. He is so creative and I love how his mind works.” They are both changing their surname to his stage name, Wareham.

They wanted an outdoor ceremony and chose Millbridge Court, an exclusive use wedding venue in Surrey. Brooke made signs and an order of service like a theatre programme.

She embroidered (for the first time) a flower design on Converse trainers to wear after the ceremony and the groomsmen’s birth flowers on handkerchiefs.

Brooke’s father, Mark, died from cancer when she was 11. She walked up the aisle with his brother to an instrumental version of The Jam’s *English Rose*, which played at her father’s funeral. Her mother’s brother-in-law read a poem, *My Little Girl Don’t Cry For Me*. Her stepfather gave a speech later in the day. A friend, who is Scottish and an actor, read the Robert Burns poem *A Red, Red Rose*. The newlyweds exited to *Pure Imagination* from the film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* and were sprayed with blowing bubbles.

Tables at the wedding breakfast, identified by number, each had a small notebook for guests to write messages, which the couple will read when they reach that anniversary. Brooke had painted a tree for guests to add their thumbprints as leaves. They gave a joint speech.

Christopher’s best man, Tom Kiteley, who appeared in *The Debate* with him and voiced Snow Leopard in the film *Wicked*, was struggling with his voice after shouting for England during the World Cup.

Brooke and Christopher’s first dance was to Ella Fitzgerald’s *Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered*. Guests roasted marshmallows on a fire pit. For their minimoon, the couple went to see Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* at Stratford-upon-Avon. “I didn’t know a day could be so perfect,” she says. “You always wait for something bad to happen and nothing did.”

If you would like to feature a wedding or engagement or the birth of a child on these pages, call 020 7782 5583, Mon-Fri, to discuss the content and cost, or email: readerslives@thetimes.co.uk

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Narainduth Sookhoo
Plain-speaking Mauritian commentator and attaché

Narainduth Sookhoo, who died aged 79, appeared in The Times on Saturday March 1, 2025

THE TIMES

Remembering loved ones

Consultant physician and lay preacher

Professor Peter Howdle, 77

Having always wanted to work as a physician in a teaching hospital, the gastroenterologist Peter Howdle got his first job as house officer at St James's University Hospital in Leeds. Apart from a year in the US on a Fulbright travelling scholarship to Harvard — where a highlight was to attend a dinner with a talk given by Senator Fulbright — he remained in the hospital for the next 37 years: a kindly, respected and fun figure noted for his warmth and interest in both colleagues and patients.

In 1987 Peter was appointed as senior lecturer and consultant physician and gastroenterologist to the professorial medical unit, where he was among the first in Leeds to introduce the new colonoscopy procedures then being adopted. Yet while he looked after patients with a wide range of gastrointestinal and liver diseases, his clinical and research interest was in coeliac disease, the condition behind gluten intolerance.

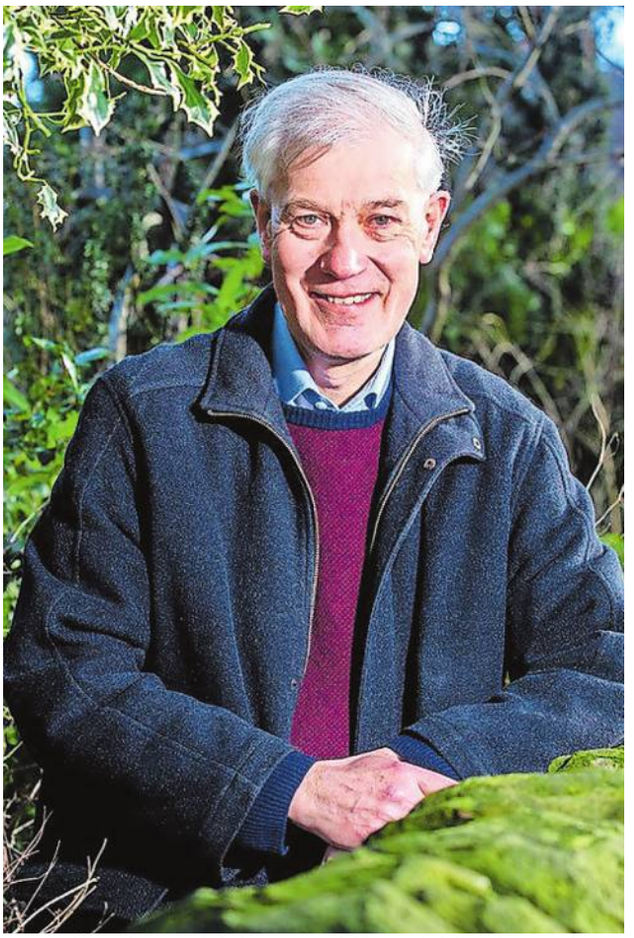
If his academic career led to more than 100 scientific publications, then he was equally rewarded by the gratitude of his patients when they reported back that they "didn't know you could feel so well in your life".

He went on to serve as a governor and trustee, and sometime chair, of the medical advisory committee of Coeliac UK, which in 2011 recognised his efforts with a Distinguished Service award. He was also a trustee of the Medical Council on Alcohol, and a chair of guidelines committees of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

Peter David Howdle was born in 1948, the same year as the introduction of the National Health Service, in Pontefract, Yorkshire. His father Harry had been raised in a Methodist farming family but left the running of the farm to a sibling to become a professional organist and piano teacher. A bachelor until his mid-fifties, Harry then married Mary Baugh, who was in her thirties. Peter, an only child, was born when Harry was 57.

Mary had spent the war years nursing at Killingbeck Hospital in Leeds and her appreciation of the "miracle" of antibiotics may have left an impression on Peter who wanted to go into medicine from an early age. He otherwise spent his childhood roaming the outdoors, a *Just William* figure whom younger cousins remember in a cub scout uniform and encouraging them to follow him as he clambered along the top of the garage roof, across a fence and back again.

When he was ten his father died unexpectedly in the middle of a piano lesson and, left alone with his mother, he spent his formative years with a sense of responsibility towards her. He went on to the King's School in Pontefract where he took on the part of Horatio in *Hamlet*, and played the cello and the piano.



Peter and his wife Susan, left, first met as children on holiday. They were later both elected vice-president of the Methodist Conference, a first for a couple

At the nearby girls' school, Pontefract Girls' High, Susan Lowery was a pupil. They had first met when they were both eight at a Methodist holiday hotel in Blackpool; the friendship grew into a romance during their teens. When Peter was 16 and felt a calling to be a lay preacher, it was Ralph Lowery, his superintendent minister and Susan's father, who gave him the note to preach, or authority to train.

With the encouragement of his headmaster, after leaving school Peter was accepted to train at Leeds University Medical School before qualifying as a doctor in 1972. In 1987 he was appointed senior lecturer and consultant physician and gastroenterologist to the professorial medical unit alongside Professor Monty Losowsky and others; in 1996 he was promoted to professor in recognition of his work for the university in teaching, research and medical education.

Possessed of a gentle efficiency and humour and an ability to combine attention to detail with the bigger picture, he is remembered by colleagues for his stock phrase at the end of ward rounds: "So, do we have a plan?" The same clear-headed approach was brought into play in his life in the Methodist church.

He served as a lay preacher for more than 50 years, becoming in 2002 vice-president of the Methodist Conference; Susan, whom he married in 1972 and who taught law at Bristol University and Sheffield University, later served as a member of the Council on Tribunals and became vice-president of the Conference in 1993, making them to date the only married couple to have been elected.

His stock phrase at the end of ward rounds was, 'So, do we have a plan?'

He also chaired with wisdom and deep Christian commitment several connexional bodies, including the strategy and resources committee of the Methodist Council, and he was for 11 years co-chair, with the Bishop of Peterborough and then the Bishop of Coventry, of the Joint Implementation Commission of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant.

In 2017 he was awarded the Lambeth Cross for ecumenism by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby.

To relax, Peter read widely, from detective fiction through to history, theology, Wisden and poetry. He also gardened and did woodwork, and he was proud to have built his own clavichord.

Yet his energy was largely reserved for others, whether the children of family friends whom he mentored — he and Susan did not have children — or colleagues and patients. It was rare for Peter not to remember the events of each of his patients' lives outside their medical issues, and his warmth and attentiveness left an impression. When he finally retired, and suggested to one patient that they move on to a younger colleague, the response, to his amusement, was: "But I really only come to clinic to chat to you."

Unfailingly kind oil entrepreneur devoted to education and family

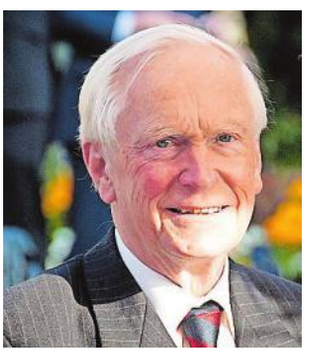
Robert Hunt-Grubbe, 87

Having completed his studies in mechanical sciences at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, Robert Hunt-Grubbe was expected to return to his family home at Potterne, Wiltshire, and run the estate. Yet he decided to eschew the conventional path and instead joined the oil services company Schlumberger, surveying oil wells in the Libyan desert.

The desert is not a place that provides many opportunities for rest and relaxation, but with colleagues he invented a sport they called "oil skiing", which involved being towed by a Land Rover at high speed across the shallow fringes of the oil lakes. After Libya he was sent by Schlumberger to Connecticut in the US to do research and development.

In 1975 Robert was the joint founder of an Anglo-French oil well company operating in Iran, and returned to Britain four years later with the 1979 revolution and the fall of the Shah. Passionate about education, he then found a position at the University of Reading in the department of cybernetics where he pioneered research between industry and university, a rare concept at the time. He went on to found Sondex Geophysical Equipment, a manufacturer of tools for use in the oil and gas industries which grew to become a leading supplier of oil well instrumentation. In 1999 Robert won the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award, and Sondex went on to win two Queen's Awards for Enterprise in 2000 and 2006.

Robert Henry Hunt-Grubbe was born in 1938 into an illustrious family which, for generations, had played an important part in the life of north Wiltshire, and Devizes and Potterne in particular. He was the only son of Commander Brudenell Hunt-Grubbe RN and his wife, Joan Bruges, and had an older sister, Jenevora. Much was expected of him.



After finishing his Cambridge degree in only two years, Robert went to Libya

Educated at Hawtreys prep school in Wiltshire, followed by Radley College in Oxfordshire, he made excellent academic progress. His National Service was spent in Cyprus as a junior officer in the Royal Horse Guards (the Blues), an experience he found tough but character-building.

In 1959 he went up to Cambridge and completed his three-year course in only two years, having also published a paper which explained how leaks in pipes could be pinpointed by the use of sound, a new solution to an ancient problem. He also rowed in the college's First Boat and made lifelong friendships. In 1975 he married Julia Anderson.

On his retirement, Robert and Julia returned to his ancestral home, Eastwell, which was built in 1540 and required much restoration. They set about working on the house as well as a property, Bonporteau, on the Côte d'Azur, which Robert had known since childhood. Julia survives him together with their four children, Harriet, Charlotte, Henry and Rupert, and six grandchildren.

A countryman at heart, Robert spent his final decades working tirelessly and generously for many causes. His love of academia meant he was involved in several schools and universities, especially Trinity College, Oxford, where he was elected a Sir Thomas Pope fellow and where family connections dated back to 1671. He was particularly pleased in helping to save Devizes Assize Court, a noble Victorian building that will now house a local museum. Other interests included forestry, lepidoptery, choral music and tennis.

A loyal parish councillor and a contributor within the village, Robert was also a visionary with compassion and humility. He was known to be unfailingly kind and caring to all, especially the young, whom he greatly encouraged to achieve their own goals.

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Register

Births, Marriages and Deaths

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"LISTEN now, my people, and come to me; come to me, and you will have life! I will make a lasting covenant with you and give you the blessings I promised to David." Isaiah 55.3 (GNB)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

MCMANUS on 27th July 2026 to Sophie and Alex, a daughter, Lara Celeste, sister to Patrick. Their thanks to the staff of the Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital in Acton, London.

WATKINS on 3rd August 2026 to Sophie (née Willcocks) and Alex, a daughter, Constance Marie, sister to Martha. Born in Luxembourg to delighted parents.

Forthcoming Marriages

MISS Y. B. D. A. TAYLOR AND MISS A. L. CUFF
The engagement is announced between Yazmin B. D. A. Taylor, elder daughter of Mr C. Taylor and Ms A. Akhurst of Maidstone, Kent, and Amelia L. Cuff, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs D. Cuff of Sherborne, Dorset.

SIR A. MCGRIGOR BT AND MISS L. GODFREY-FAUSSETT
The engagement is announced between Alexander, son of the late Sir James McGrigor Bt and of Lady McGrigor of Dalmally, Argyll, and Laura, elder daughter of Mr Christopher and Lady Diana Godfrey-Faussett of Midlem, Selkirkshire.

MR T. M. EYSTON AND MISS T. L. JACK
The engagement is announced between Thomas, son of Mr and Mrs Edward Eyston of East Hendred, Oxfordshire, and Tandia, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Guy Jack of Nairobi, Kenya.

MR H. M. DEACY AND MISS Y. A. JIWA
The engagement is announced between Henry Meadway, eldest son of Tom and Francesca Deacy of Shepherds Bush, London, and Yasmin Aliya, only daughter of Sheni and Lucy Jiwa of Biddestone, Wiltshire.

MR W. R. B. JONES AND MISS I. A. LAIDLAW
The engagement is announced between William, son of Alan Jones CVO OBE of Cascais, Portugal and Juliet Jones of Broadwell, Gloucestershire, and India, youngest daughter of Jonathan Laidlaw KC and Sarah Laidlaw of Chiswick, London.

MR F. J. G. GATE AND MISS L. E. ORMEROD
The engagement is announced between Frederick, only son of Mr Christopher and Mrs Sara Gate of Wimbledon, London, and Lily, youngest daughter of Dr Simon and Mrs Helen Ormerod of Norwich, Norfolk.

Marriages

MR J. R. RIDING AND MISS A. S. KRANWINKLE
The marriage took place on 1st August 2026, at Euridge Manor, Colerne, between James and Anna. Thank you to everyone who celebrated with us.

Deaths

BROWN Philip Joseph passed away on 2nd August 2026, aged 89. Much-loved husband, father and grandfather, and the founder of PJB Publications Ltd, publisher of Scrip World Pharmaceutical News and Pharmaprojects. "He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again."

BUXTON Gervase Michael, aged 87, formerly of Hertfordshire and Co Mayo, Ireland, latterly of Fulham. Beloved husband of Susan for 62 years, father of Lucy, Matthew, Caragh and Jocelyn, grandfather of seven. Died 10th August, peacefully. Much missed already.

DREJA Stefan Guillan died peacefully on 1st August 2026, aged 81, at home in Suffolk. He always carried Poland in his heart. Lovingly remembered by his wife Maureen, children Louisa and Zygmunt and greatly missed by grandchildren Bea, Bertie and Killian. All are welcome to the funeral at St Etheldreda's RC Church, Ely Place, London, EC1N 6RY. Friday 4th September at 11.30am. Reception afterwards. Family flowers only. Donations to Down's Syndrome Association and St Elizabeth's Hospice, Ipswich.

GRIFFIN Conor Patrick Stephen died peacefully on 30th July 2026, aged 85, after a period of poor health. Much-loved Daddy of Marie Louise, Jamie and Rachel and proud Grandpa of Eloise and Emilia. Devoted brother to Mary, John and the late Louise and a kind uncle to his many nieces and nephews. He will be sorely missed by his family near and far and by all who knew and loved him. The Griffins have lost an elder. The Times has lost an avid reader and crossword master. Funeral at Aldershot Crematorium on 2nd September at 10am. No flowers by request, but please make any donations in Conor's memory to RNLI.

KEMP-GEE Mark Norman died peacefully on 9th August 2026, aged 80, at home. Donations, if desired, to St Michael's Hospice, North Hampshire.

KENDALL Thomas Joseph died peacefully at home on 30th July 2026, aged 91. Dearly loved by his wife, Sue, his sons, James, William and Edward, and their families. Thanksgiving service on Thursday 27th August at 2pm at St Saviour's Church, Guildford.

LACY Janet Anne (née Yardley) passed away on 31st July 2026, aged 81. Reunited with her husband, Eddie, and their son Wayne. Special Mum to Darran, Nicki, Sheldon and Kerris. A devoted Nana to Stephen, Joshua, Ryan, Amelia, Cooper, Lucille, Oakley and Clover. The service is to be held on Saturday 29th August at Haltemprice Crematorium at 10.30am. Family flowers only please but donations may be left at the service in aid of MND.

LEE Lamorna (née Cambell) on 30th July 2026, aged 92. Peacefully after a short illness. Much-loved mother to Mark and sister to Lalage.

LYNN Alex on 15th August 2025, aged 39. We stay grieving for a beloved son.

WAINMAN Richard John died peacefully at home on 27th July 2026, aged 94. Beloved husband of Lilah and the late Mary, loving father of Sarah, Julia, Philip and Brian, grandfather, great-grandfather and stepfather. Thanksgiving service on 24th August. No flowers please. Donations, if desired, to Royal National Institute for Deaf People: rnid.org.uk or 0808 8080123.

WOOLSEY Jeremy John died peacefully on 17th July 2026, aged 91. The funeral service will take place at Burgh St Peter church, NR34 0DD on Thursday 27th August at 11am. Donations in memory of Jeremy can be made via the Much Loved page at rosedalefuneralhome.co.uk

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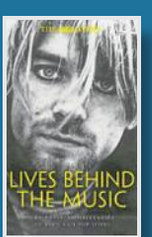


THE TIMES

Trustee Acts

NOTICE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to S27 of the Trustee Act, 1925 that any person having a Claim against or an Interest in the Estate of any of the deceased persons whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified; after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had a notice.
SANDIFORD, Richard Mark of 19 Flat, Vertex Apartments, 131 Palmerston Road, London, SW19 1PB died on 24/08/2025, claims under s27 Trustee Act to Christopher Sandiford, c/o Knights, The Brampton, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 0QW. Ref: PGR11/KEA2384/1 by 16/10/2026

Legal Notices

MISSING FREEHOLDER
RE: FREEHOLD INTEREST AT 58 Manor Road, South Norwood, SE25 4TD NOTICE TO JOSEPH ROY DEEBLE and LUCILLE MAUDE DEEBLE, or their descendants, or any persons having an interest in the Freehold title. Any person having information regarding the whereabouts of the above named freeholder whose last known address was 58 Manor Road, South Norwood SE25 4TD or their successors in title, please contact Ms. Hariri of Taylor Rose Solicitors at Sadaf.hariri@taylor-rose.co.uk /+ 44 203 319 1210 (Reference: SFH/472284/1) The leaseholders of the above-mentioned premises are seeking to purchase the freehold under the Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, and intend to apply to the County Court for a Vesting Order if the freeholder cannot be located.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

To place notices for these sections please call 020 7782 7553

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 11.30am three days prior to insertion

If you are in troubled waters look to the star of the sea

Credo
Catherine Pepinster

Holidaymakers travelling to Europe this summer cannot fail to notice that devotion to the Virgin Mary remains a powerful tradition across the continent. August 15, the feast of the Assumption, is a bank holiday in Italy, Spain, France, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia — countries with a strong Roman Catholic culture.

The feast of the Assumption celebrates the belief that Mary, mother of Jesus, was assumed body and soul into Heaven at the end of her earthly life. Although this belief was only formally recognised as Catholic dogma by Pope Pius XII in 1950, it had been accepted by most of the Catholic faithful for centuries. It was often linked to celebrations marking the growing season and in Spain it is sometimes also called the Feast of Our Lady of the Harvest.

Processions with Mary's statue or image adorned with flowers, along with marching bands and dancing, can be found across the Mediterranean, with celebrations lasting into the night. They are particularly popular on the islands of the Med, including Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily, with not only Masses said but concerts and firework displays held.

Often they take place by the seashore. In Siniscola, on the eastern coast of Sardinia, a statue of the Virgin is taken from the church and taken out to sea by boat. On the island of Sicily, celebrations begin on August 14, with midnight dips in the sea. On August 15 itself, the most spectacular celebration is in Messina, where thousands of people pull a 15m-tall float, which symbolises the Virgin's ascent into Heaven, surrounded by a crowd of angels.

No such huge public displays of celebration mark August 15 in England, where Marian devotion was disapproved of during the Protestant Reformation and never really recovered in Anglican churches. And yet, if you look, you will find evidence that it never entirely disappeared. Holidaymakers along the English coast will, like those who venture to the Mediterranean, find signs of an ancient devotional tradition to Mary throughout the year through the large numbers of churches close to the sea named after her. This choosing of her as patron of these seaside parishes reflects the ancient Christian belief that Mary is a special protector of those who live by and work on the sea.

Since medieval times, Mary has been called Stella Maris, or Star of the Sea, its origin quite possibly accidental due to an early error in the writing of the name Mary. But it led to her being seen as a guiding star to draw people to her son, and this led to the idea that she was a protector of those at sea.

In time, Stella Maris became synonymous with Polaris or the North Star. Bernard of Clairvaux, founder of the Cistercian order, wrote in the 12th century, "If the winds of temptation arise; if you are driven upon the rocks of tribulation look to the star, call on Mary. If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, of ambition, of envy, of rivalry, look to the star, call on Mary. Should anger, or avarice, or fleshly desire violently assail the frail vessel of your soul, look at the star, call upon Mary."

You will find churches dedicated to St Mary in Penzance, in Weymouth, Poole and right along the south coast to Dover and up to Felixstowe in Suffolk. They are further north, too, in Scarborough and Whitby. Holidaymakers may well visit St Mary's Bay near Brixham or near Romney Marsh in Kent. They can wander St Mary's Bay beach and cliffs in Broadstairs, Kent, or Marychurch near Torquay — all reminders of the lingering, historic connection between the sea and Stella Maris. These churches of Mary could be seen at sea, a guide to those coming back to shore after a day fishing, or for those seeking safe harbour as the wind picks up and storm clouds gather.

Today there are Roman Catholic churches too dedicated to Mary along the coast, in places such as Hastings, Broadstairs, Lowestoft and Ellesmere Port. By far the most spectacular is Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Winefride on the island of Anglesey. Designed in 1932 by the Italian architect Giuseppe Rinvolucri, the modernist masterpiece is built to represent an upturned hull of a boat, with porthole-like windows.

Stella Maris today is not just an ancient title given to Mary but the name of a global Catholic maritime charity, which operates port chaplaincies worldwide to support seafarers. Cardinal Michael Czerny, a senior Vatican prelate, recently wrote a message for Sea Sunday, celebrated by the Catholic Church in July, when it focuses on the work of Stella Maris.

He said the sea should remind us of our shared responsibility towards one another. "Oceans do not divide people; they connect them," he wrote, describing those who worked at sea as bridges between nations, cultures, religions and economies. But those people, he said, needed to be welcomed, loved and remembered, and so "they need a presence". For countless people over the years living near the sea, it is Mary who is a vital presence, a guide and a protector.

Catherine Pepinster is a writer and journalist

Court Circular

Balmoral Castle
14th August, 2026
The King, Patron, the Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society, this morning attended an Event at Ballindalloch Castle to mark the publication of the One Hundred and Fiftieth edition of the Society's Herd Book and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Banffshire (Mr Andrew Simpson), the Chief Executive Officer of the Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society (Mr Robert Gilchrist) and the Owners of Ballindalloch Castle (Mr and Mrs Guy McPherson Grant).

His Majesty, escorted by the President of the Aberdeen Angus Cattle Society (Mr Matthew Currie) and Ballindalloch Farm Manager (Mr David Johnstone), walked to the cattle field and inspected the Ballindalloch Aberdeen-Angus Herd, before exiting the field through the King Charles Gate and meeting members of the Society and representatives of local businesses and organisations.

St James's Palace
14th August, 2026
The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, Viva Arts and Community Group, and The Duchess of Edinburgh this morning attended a performance of *Come From Away* at theSpace at Surgeons' Hall, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Nicolson Street, Edinburgh.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, Dance Base, this afternoon attended a performance of *Common Ground* at 14-16 Grassmarket, Edinburgh, and was received by Mr James Thomson (Deputy Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh).

His Royal Highness, Colonel-in-Chief, The Queen's Royal Hussars (The Queen's Own and Royal Irish), and Colonel-in-Chief, The Royal Dragoon Guards, later visited the Pipe Bands at Redford Barracks, Colinton Road, Edinburgh.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Royal Patron, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, and Patron, Edinburgh International Festival, and The Duchess of Edinburgh this evening attended a performance of *Inala* at 30b Grindlay Street, Edinburgh.

The Duchess of Edinburgh, Patron, this afternoon visited Capability Scotland, Riccarton Day Opportunities Service, Mercury House, Heriot-Watt University Research Park, Edinburgh, to mark its Eighteenth Anniversary, and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh (Councillor Robert Aldridge, the Rt Hon the Lord Provost).

The Times Saturday Quiz Olav Bjortomt

1 Members of which profession use a blackboard in the "chalk and talk" method?

2 Cuthbert Collingwood assumed command of the British fleet after Nelson died at which battle?

3 The name of which West Midlands town is thought to derive from "soily hill"?

4 Which dog companion of the animated character Wallace has his birthday on February 12?

5 In 1909, the RMS Mauretania achieved the fastest westbound crossing of which ocean?

6 Which Channel 4 show had its tent filming location at Down Hall Hotel in Essex in 2020 and 2021?

7 What is the most abundant gas in the Earth's atmosphere?

8 The American journalist Edgar Snow wrote the 1937 book *Red Star Over* ... which Asian country?

9 Which bass player wrote the 2002 book *Rolling with the Stones*?

10 In 1787, the Swedish artist Adolf Ulrik Wertmüller painted *Danaë and the Shower of* ... which substance?

11 Keiko Fujimori was recently sworn in as president of which South American country?

12 Diyarbakır is the largest Kurdish-majority city in which transcontinental country?

13 Who was appointed as the first astronomer royal by Charles II in 1675?

20

ALAMY

14 Punic, or Carthaginian, is an extinct variety of which Canaanite language?

15 Produced in Copenhagen since 1818, what is the "world's first and most awarded cherry liqueur"?

16 What is the surname of the title character in the EM Forster novel *Maurice*?

17 Which US artist's breakout performance series was *The 7,000 Year Old Woman* (1977-79)?

18 The Swedish darts player Andreas Harrysson shares his nickname with which film character, played by Clint Eastwood?

19 Which British driver, aged 69, died following an accident at the 2014 Silverstone Classic?

20 Which London palace's hedge maze is pictured?

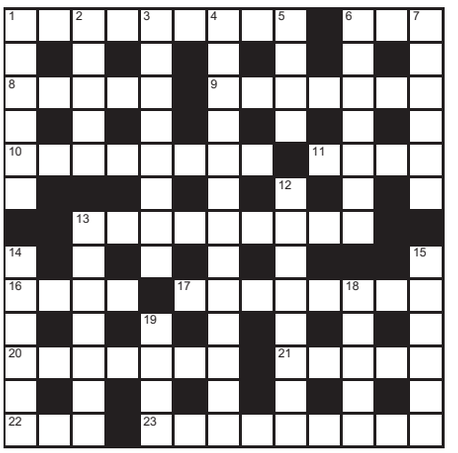
Answers below right

Last week's O Tempora! solution

P	R	O	P	I	N	Q	U	O	■	M	U	S	■	■
A	■	P	L	■	U	■	S	■	U	■	A	■	■	■
L	A	S	C	I	V	A	■	C	O	R	A	M	■	■
U	■	■	C	■	N	■	U	M	■	E	■	■	■	■
D	I	S	C	O	■	T	E	L	L	U	S	■	■	■
O	■	E	■	■	U	■	O	■	R	■	C	■	■	■
S	I	V	I	S	A	M	A	R	I	A	M	A	■	■
I	■	E	A	■	P	■	■	■	R	■	N	■	■	■
■	C	R	A	B	R	O	■	A	V	E	X	I	■	■
U	■	I	■	R	■	T	■	P	■	■	■	T	■	■
M	E	T	U	I	■	E	X	P	L	O	D	I	■	■
O	■	A	■	N	S	■	I	■	B	■	E	■	■	■
R	U	S	■	A	C	T	U	A	R	I	A	S	■	■

O Tempora! Crossword DLXVII by Aenigmatifex

A weekly crossword for the classically minded



Clues, which may be straight or mildly cryptic, always lead to answers in Latin

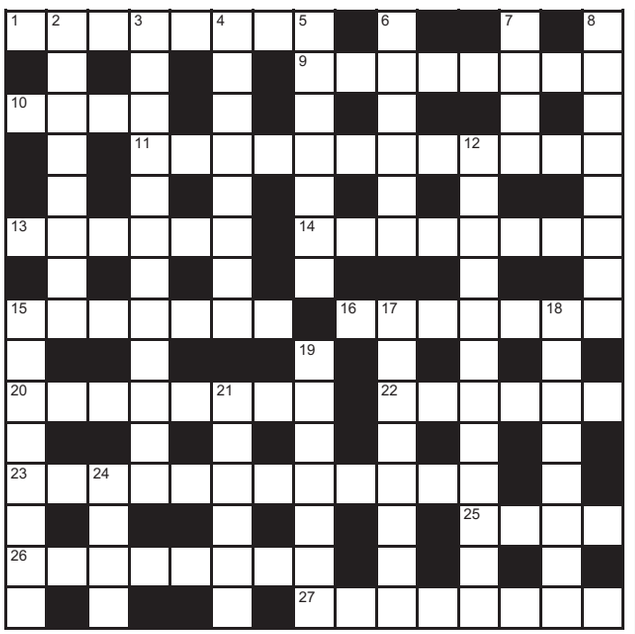
Across

1 Snatch or grab — it has to be done! (9)
6 Heart and soul (3)
8 Makes a noise: aureus ex umero ___ arcus et arma Dianae (Aen. 11.652) (5)
9 Innermost part, pith, marrow (7)
10 Castellum aquae, lacus (8)
11 With a laugh and a joke (4)
13 Horse-riding: vero prodest ambulatio, gestatio et ea pluribus modis, ___ stomacho et coxis utilissima (Plin. Nat. 28.14) (9)
16 Pater patris (4)
17 Something whiter than white, dazzling (8)
20 Monstravit, prodidit (7)
21 Circuli, gyri, spirae (nom.) (5)
22 At this time, already (3)
23 By land: exercitum itinere ___ pergere iubet (Tac. Hist. 2.59) (abl.) (9)

Down

1 I cut back; praecido, amputo (6)
2 In the possession of; quodcumque culpa praemium ex omni tuli / hoc est ___ te (Sen. Med. 244-5) (5)
3 He's last in the queue! (8)
4 Significantur, ostenduntur (13)
5 Only just in the way (4)
6 I gather, bring together, assemble (7)
7 Putamus, cogitamus (6)
12 Diligenter compone ut deo sis (8)
13 Certainly, for my part (7)
14 Men from the sea (nom.) (6)
15 Lost: ex conparatione regis novi desiderium excitabatur ___ (Curt. 10.8) (6)
18 Ei opus est (5)
19 Goes out (offstage) (4)

Times Crossword No 29,622



A £20 Waterstones gift voucher will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened on Thursday. Enter by post to: Times Crossword No 29,622, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or by email to: prize@thetimes.co.uk, with "Crossword 29622" in the subject line. Open to 18+, UK & ROI residents only. Winners and solutions will appear on Monday week.

Name/Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Across

1 Fish firm behind dock making a comeback (8)
9 One Scots smoker in queue to light up (8)
10 Society combined with lowlife (4)
11 What describes ideal spot, as corrupt, tempter at last having entered? (8,4)
13 Citrus fruit just turning on Aegean isle (6)
14 Inertia among rebel group without leader (8)
15 Dreamy scientist has width for depth (7)
16 Strength of attachment in enclave dissipated (7)
20 Raging hero to cool down in ebbing ocean (8)
22 Husband leaves part containing spicy grub (6)
23 Unknown actors in one club altered play structure (6,6)
25 Ham producer with concern for animal welfare? (4)
26 Maybe book fair subject to further changes (8)
27 Partner that was case manager for trader (8)

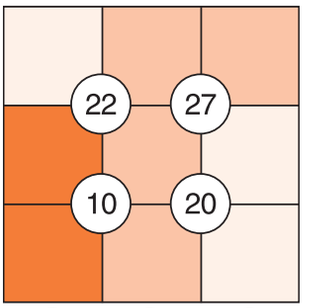
Down

2 Academician entered secretly (2,6)
3 Thrill, not small, after PC taking million in damages (12)
4 In the East, Mike and sibling fare better than most? (8)
5 Arrogance said to develop: have row about that (7)
6 State after accepting request (6)
7 Bathing beach upper crust love (4)
8 Period ending this stretch in prison (8)
12 Landlord old fellow collecting new desktop item (6,6)
15 Novelist in apartment ringing taxi service (8)
17 Arrogant show preceding fall — land here? (8)
18 Church position allows in club practising abstinence (8)
19 Ancient deity (answer beginning with E) (7)
21 Floor design (6)
24 Universal personal cover set up in part of US (4)

Yesterday's solution 29,621

G	O	T	H	E	N	B	U	R	G	■	I	T	C	H
■	R	■	O	■	Y	■	T	■	A	■	N	■	O	■
S	T	I	P	P	L	E	R	■	S	A	T	U	R	N
■	H	■	■	O	■	I	■	T	■	O	■	P	■	■
C	O	F	F	I	N	■	C	A	R	E	L	E	S	S
■	D	■	I	■	■	L	■	O	■	E	■	E	■	■
R	O	U	G	H	S	L	E	E	P	E	R	■	■	■
■	X	■	U	■	E	■	■	U	■	A	■	P	■	■
■	■	■	R	E	A	P	E	R	B	I	N	D	E	R
■	S	■	E	■	M	■	L	■	■	C	■	N	■	■
C	H	A	S	T	I	S	E	■	V	I	E	N	N	A
■	I	■	K	■	N	■	A	■	E	■	■	I	■	■
T	E	N	A	C	E	■	N	A	R	B	O	N	N	E
■	L	■	T	■	S	■	O	■	G	■	I	■	E	■
A	D	Z	E	■	S	U	R	R	E	A	L	I	S	T

Sakuro No 4821



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct.
Solution *MindGames in Saturday Review*

Quiz answers 1 Teaching 2 Battle of Trafalgar 3 Solihull 4 Gromit 5 Atlantic Ocean 6 *The Great British Bake Off* 7 Nitrogen 8 China 9 Bill Wyman 10 Gold 11 Peru 12 Turkey 13 John Flamsteed 14 Phoenician 15 Heering cherry liqueur 16 Hall 17 Betsy Damon 18 Dirty Harry 19 Denis Welch 20 Hampton Court Palace.

Concise Quintagram answers 1 Dock 2 Gander 3 Diddle 4 Contrary 5 Sixpence.

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HARGREAVES
LANSDOWN

THE TIMES

Saturday August 15 2026

Why I rejected my ADHD diagnosis

Plus Supermarket ice cream: a nutritionist's verdict

Weekend

Travel starts on page 29

What the Body Coach feeds his kids

No UPFs allowed!

Joe Wicks with his four children

Escape to the woods!

Cool UK cabins to stay in

25 best villas in Portugal

Still time to book for late summer

I was trolled for my campaign

Joe Wicks talks to Julia Llewellyn Smith about how he feeds his four children

Joe Wicks with his son Marley

The Body Coach Joe Wicks appears for our Teams interview not at a desk but on a wobbly phone screen held in front of him as he walks rapidly in a red vest, his curls blowing in the breeze.

"I call it a walkie-talkie, taking a call and getting my steps in," he explains. He's lapping the gated estate in Virginia Water, Surrey, where he lives with his wife, Rosie, and their four children, Indie, eight, Marley, six, Leni, three, and Dusty, two. "It's pretty loud in the house today," he says, grimacing. "They're all at home. I was trying to film a recipe and a workout, and the kids are screaming. Rosie's not very well, there's a sick bug going around, so I thought, I'm getting out of here."

A waggish passer-by yells: "You should be running not walking!" "I've walked 11km," Wicks replies. "My knees are nearly out."

Wicks, 40, is one of the original influencers, having ridden the first wave of YouTube and Instagram stardom to build an empire. He started his career handing out flyers for his fitness boot camps outside Richmond Tube station, and built a huge social media following sharing his food ideas, which brought him to the attention of a publisher. In 2015 his first cookbook, *Lean in 15*, sold 1.4 million copies. He reached household-name status during the pandemic, when he became the nation's personal trainer, hosting a live 30-minute YouTube *PE with Joe* workout every morning. At its peak more than 950,000 people participated. He donated his advertising profits to the NHS and earned an MBE.

Since then he has relentlessly pursued his aim to make the nation fitter, launching his Body Coach fitness app and regularly uploading free-to-use YouTube workouts (I do his 15-minute weights religiously). He's used to gushing feedback about how he has transformed lives, so it was a shock when last year's Channel 4 documentary *Joe Wicks: Licensed to Kill,* about the dangers of ultraprocessed foods, was met with hostility. Wicks and his co-presenter Dr Chris van Tulleken created a UPF-heavy "Killer" protein bar full of ingredients linked to cancer, diarrhoea and early death, yet all legal in the UK and often found in products marketed as "healthy".

Overnight he lost a chunk of his 4.6 million-strong Instagram following. Fitness professionals and food influencers piled on, accusing him of "scaremongering" and being "dishonest, a charlatan and a liar" for having previously endorsed similar products and downplaying UPFs' dangers.

Afterwards, in television and podcast appearances, Wicks was obviously shaken. "I didn't know then about anxiety, depression and behavioural issues in children being associated with eating these foods. I can't pretend I knew everything back then," he said at the time. "That doesn't mean that I can't have a different opinion today."

"The whole thing was tough, it affected me," he says now. "You're like, 'Oh my God, everyone hates me, everyone's pointing at me and laughing.' I'm very sensitive so I don't like putting things out there that are polarising and are going to make people think I'm spreading a bad message."

The backlash reminded me of Jamie Oliver's pre-social-media attempt to rid school dinners of junk food, which resulted in parents passing burgers and chips through the school railings. Wicks had consulted Oliver about making the documentary. "He said, 'If you're passionate about it, go for it.' But he did warn me you are going to be putting yourself above the parapet, and it's going to be tough."

Despite the headlines, viewer reactions to the show were largely positive. "Then you go into some big environment, like running the [2026 London] marathon, and everyone's cheering you on and being really supportive. You realise social media is not a reflection of real-life opinions.

"Ultimately I've shared something that educated people on looking at ingredients, on understanding the impacts [of UPFs]. It's confronting because it's triggering, it's emotional talking about food, but we can't shy away from the fact it really, really affects not just our weight — it's our health, our risk of cancer, our mental health, and it affects our children the same."

Yet Wicks's hopes for policy change were crushed. "That was my attempt at a campaign, trying to get the government to put health warnings on food, but I never heard from them. It's quite demotivating and demoralising when you don't get a response. You feel like nothing's going to change."

The normally upbeat Wicks looks dejected. It's like witnessing a kicked puppy. "I just come back to 'What am I good at?'" he says. "I'm good at getting people cooking and moving, and I get people inspired."

He has reverted to that aim with his 14th book, *Healthy Start*, full of healthy recipes parents can easily prepare with (or without) their children that everyone will eat — think prawn summer rolls and creamy courgette orzo. "It's the recipes we eat as a family at home. I've got a rule: one family, one meal. I'm consistent with that, because if you start cooking multiple things and offering alternatives kids realise you're going to make something different if they reject it. And if you can sit together as a family sometimes and cook together once a week, it's a really lovely way of bonding and a great life skill. It makes kids more adventurous and more curious about food."

Wicks's children were all weaned onto a spicy, varied diet and aren't too fussy, "though none of them will eat banana, avocado or mushrooms — it's a texture thing". Is he like Gwyneth Paltrow, who said she'd "rather die" than let her kids eat Cup a Soup? "At a party I'm still 'fill your boots', but I'm trying to teach them to listen to your body a little bit, 'How's your tummy feeling? How's your energy?' It's trying to let them understand that some foods taste great but don't make you feel great."

Their childhood is in sharp contrast to Wicks's upbringing on benefits in a Surrey council estate. His father was a heroin addict ("He's clean now, it's all good") and his Spanish mother, while loving, suffered from eating disorders and obsessive compulsive disorder. No one cooked. Wicks and his brothers Nikki (now his manager) and George (a landscape gardener) subsisted on potato waffles, frozen crispy pancakes and Sunny Delight. "I would guess that my diet growing up was around 90 per cent UPF," he writes in the book.

> "I thought, oh my God, everyone hates me, everyone's pointing at me and laughing

"I was so hyperactive at school," he tells me today. "I didn't really start understanding how all those energy drinks and chocolate bars affected me until I was about 25. It was a real lightbulb moment to think, 'This is how it feels not to wake up feeling groggy and rough.'"

His parents, who have long divorced and to whom, despite everything, he's very close, were always shouting. Now Wicks finds eating well helps him to curb his instincts to snap at his kids. "When I'm not eating well I'm really irritable, I feel down and negative. I don't always get it right, and when I shout I feel really bad and I apologise. But I am with the kids all the time, they're always there, firing questions at you, there's this bombardment of information. So you have to check in on yourself and acknowledge you're not going to always react well.

"They're always going to push your buttons, but I think the more I'm around them the easier it becomes. This morning I laughed out loud because the two little ones were fighting, trying to get some frozen mango out of the freezer, and snatching off each other. I was like, 'This is just mad.' If you walked into the house you'd be like, 'Oh my God.' You wouldn't even want to stay there ten minutes, but that's our normal level of volume." Last time we spoke, two years ago, Wicks said he wanted six children. He smiles ruefully. "We're really happy with four. If we had another it'd be a bonus. But I don't think six is my vision any more. It's a bit much."

Wicks is a completely hands-on dad. Despite his reported net worth of more than £55 million he and Rosie, a former fashion and glamour model, split the household chores. His 60-year-old mother often babysits but there's no nanny. "You can't have four kids and then be like, 'See ya!' We want to be there. We are their carers and it's a really, really tough job. It's lucky I work at the house, so most of the time I'm there, because I don't think Rosie would manage on her own."

A cleaner comes once a week. "But all day we're tidying up constantly." He has tried to shake off the legacy of growing up in a house his mother cleaned incessantly, "like an Ikea showroom". "Our carpets really stress us out. We moved into this house five years ago and they were pristine, now there are stains everywhere. There's crayon on the walls. There's felt-tip on the sofas. But I've just let go of it. A chair will have a pencil mark [and] Rosie will want to get a new one — I don't agree with that. When you really let go of that feeling of 'things have to stay perfect' you can relax a bit more."

To make life even more challenging, the couple homeschool their two eldest children. "It's really stressful. It's got benefits — I love being with them, and naturally I am a coach and a teacher, so I do enjoy it. But it's definitely not easy with the little ones running around." They follow no rigid timetable but "bolt learning into the day".

against UPFs. It was really tough

COVER AND BELOW: MIKE ENGLISH

Chicken tikka pilaf

"We do a lot of fun stuff around games and play, and try to have half an hour sitting down here and there, as opposed to hours and hours, because that just doesn't work." Wicks teaches maths through playing darts. "We double the numbers, triple the numbers and subtract from 50. Or we play Scrabble." Inspectors are visiting the next day. "Some homeschool parents say you don't have to accept those visits, but we're always open to it. It's nice to know we're actually giving the kids a good education."

The children make friends through meet-ups with other homeschooled children ("there are loads now") and attending clubs such as Stagecoach. He's unsure how long it will continue. "These years are so precious, and I want to be with them as much as I can. But if they really want to experience school I wouldn't stop them. Maybe they'll go to secondary school."

Does he ever want a break? "Every day, about 9pm. Trying to get them all to sleep takes so long, there's no respite. But I'm just used to it now. It's a choice we made — we have to take rough with the smooth. I could have been way more successful in my life and career if I'd gone down the TV route, taken up every offer, done all the travelling, but from the start I wanted to be present. Being a dad is one of the most stressful, challenging things but I love it. I've designed my life around social media and YouTube because I don't want to miss my children's upbringing. I like being their role model."

Healthy Start: Fresh and Fuss-Free Meals for all the Family by Joe Wicks (Leap £22).
To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Free UK standard P&P on online orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members

Three healthy dinners that the kids will love, by the Body Coach

Chicken tikka pilaf

A curry pilaf is a rice dish cooked with curry powder, aromatic spices and often vegetables or meat. The deep flavour of the tikka paste is absorbed by the rice and the oven-baked chicken matches with it perfectly.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 100g natural yoghurt
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp mild chilli powder, optional
- Juice of half a lemon, about 1 tbsp
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

For the pilaf

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 15g fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 80g tikka masala paste
- 300g brown basmati rice, rinsed
- 200g cherry tomatoes
- 600ml chicken stock, made with 1 stock cube
- 300g Tenderstem broccoli (long-stem broccolini), cut into thirds

To serve

- Handful of coriander leaves, chopped
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

Method

1 Combine the yoghurt, cumin, paprika, chilli powder (if using) and lemon juice in a large bowl, season with salt and pepper and mix well to evenly combine. Stir in the chicken thighs until completely coated and leave to marinate for 30 min or in the fridge for up to 24 hours.

2 Heat the oven to 180C fan/gas 6. Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish or ovenproof frying pan over a medium heat. Add the marinated chicken skin-side down and cook for about 7 min on each side until beautifully golden, then lift out and set aside on a plate.

3 Add the onion, ginger and garlic to the still-hot pan (adding more oil if needed) and cook for 2-3 min until soft. Stir in the tikka masala paste and cook for another 1-2 min until fragrant. Tip in the rice and tomatoes, then pour over the stock and mix well. Nestle the chicken thighs skin-side up (along with any juices from the plate) in the liquid and bring to the boil to give it a head start. Remove from the heat and cover the pan with a lid or foil.

4 Place the pan in the oven and bake for 30 min. Remove the lid, stir in the broccoli and bake uncovered for a further 10-15 min until the chicken is cooked through and the rice is tender and has soaked up all that lovely stock.

5 Fluff the rice with a fork just before serving. Sprinkle over the chopped coriander and serve with lemon wedges for an extra zing.

Beef teriyaki

Stir-fries are amazing, especially when you are short on time and have hungry kids on the way through the door. It's probably the fastest way to cook on earth, isn't it? This one is sweet and savoury with the teriyaki sauce. It tastes decent with rice or noodles.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 sirloin steaks, visible fat removed, cut into strips 1.5-2cm thick (or use 700g lean beef stir-fry strips)
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 2 tsp grated fresh ginger
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 nests of dried egg noodles
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 150g mangetout
- 4 tbsp teriyaki sauce

To serve

- 2 tsp toasted sesame seeds
- 2 spring onions, trimmed and thinly sliced

Method

1 Remove the meat from the fridge 30 min before cooking.

2 In a bowl, mix the beef with the soy sauce and grated ginger, season with black pepper and toss to coat. Set aside for about 10 min to marinate. Meanwhile, cook the noodles according to the packet instructions then drain well, reserving some of the cooking water. Toss with some oil and set aside.

3 Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan or wok over a high heat then add half the beef and stir-fry for about 2-3 min until browned all over. Remove from the pan and set aside on a plate loosely covered with foil. Fry the remaining beef, adding more oil if needed, and transfer to the plate with the first batch.

4 Add a little more oil to the same pan and place over a medium-high heat. Tip in the onion and cook for 4-5 min, then add the garlic and cook for 1 min, making sure it doesn't burn.

5 Throw in the carrots, pepper and mangetout and stir-fry for another 4-5 min until everything is slightly tender. Add the noodles and return the beef to the pan, along with any resting juices from the plate. Pour in the teriyaki sauce, toss everything together and cook for 1-2 min until the sauce thickens and coats the beef, vegetables and noodles, loosening it with a splash of the reserved noodle cooking water so it coats everything instead of clumping.

6 Divide between 4 warmed plates or shallow bowls, then scatter with sesame seeds and spring onions to serve.

Harissa halloumi with beetroot and couscous

If you're new to cooking couscous don't be put off — it's surprisingly simple to make. It's a great thing to prepare ahead too and store in the fridge for lunch or dinner the next day. If you've not tried harissa paste, I recommend giving this a go. It's such a delicious flavour, especially alongside the honey and halloumi.

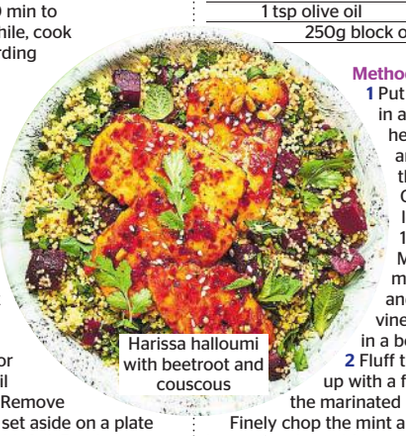
Serves 4

Ingredients

- 200g couscous
- 200ml hot vegetable stock, made with ½ stock cube
- 160g cooked beetroot, diced
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- A handful of mint leaves
- A handful of coriander leaves
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp shop-bought dukkah, to serve

For the halloumi

- 1 tbsp harissa paste
- 1 tbsp honey
- Juice of ½ lemon, about 1 tbsp
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 250g block of halloumi



Harissa halloumi with beetroot and couscous

Method

1 Put the couscous in a large heatproof bowl and pour over the hot stock. Cover and leave for 10 min. Meanwhile, mix the beetroot and balsamic vinegar together in a bowl.

2 Fluff the couscous up with a fork and stir in the marinated beetroot. Finely chop the mint and coriander leaves (setting aside some whole leaves to garnish) and stir into the couscous mix. Season to taste.

3 For the halloumi, mix the harissa paste, honey and lemon juice in a small bowl. Heat the oil in a nonstick frying pan over a medium heat, then add the halloumi and fry for 3-4 min on each side until golden. Pour in the harissa-honey mix and continue to cook until the halloumi goes sticky.

4 Divide the beetroot and couscous between 4 plates and top with the harissa halloumi. Finish with a sprinkling of the dukkah and the reserved herb leaves.

Recipes extracted from *Healthy Start*
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My amazing mum got Alzheimer's at 57. Now movement is our language

When her mother was diagnosed Talilla Henchoz, 32, was devastated. But she found a way to keep their bond alive

My mum has always been a strong woman. In her teens she became a gymnast then a bodybuilder, representing Great Britain in both. She has always been very fit, active and healthy, with a muscular physique. It's why I got into fitness coaching as a profession. She has always pushed me to take up space and live big. She told me: "If you want to climb mountains, you need to be powerful."

Seven years ago, when she was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's at 57, my brother and I were so shocked and worried about her, and with little guidance on how to support people as young as her, we wrapped her in cotton wool. We didn't want to take her out too much, or let her get out of breath. Her medications made her put on weight and she became more sedentary. It seemed safer for her to sit on the sofa and watch TV. But that's not my mum. She's an adventurer and loves to be outside. We grew up in Hereford, but when I was seven and my brother was five Dad sold his business and Mum took us out of school. She gained her teacher qualification and taught us as we travelled the world for two years.

We went to Nepal and hiked the Himalayas. Whether we were in Australia or Vietnam Mum would make us a sports day on the beach. She'd devise a long jump pit and a sprinting track. My brother and I would swim in the ocean and my parents would compete against each other. We'd even rope in other families.

Fitness has always been my mum's absolute passion. And despite her illness, she's still quite physically able. Her speech and her memory are the most affected by Alzheimer's. As her illness progressed I sensed that she felt frustrated but couldn't communicate it. We quickly realised that a cautious approach to any physical activity was terrible for her — and us. We didn't want to be sitting inside with our mum when she was so young. She needed to move.

As soon as we got her moving or dancing — anything that got her endorphins going — her cognition would improve. She'd get a spark in her eyes. Mum used to play Shania Twain every day as she drove us to school, car roof down, blasting it out. Now she could no longer formulate a sentence, but as soon as I put on Shania she'd know all the words and could speak again. We hadn't seen that joyfulness in so long. As soon as I realised it was helping, I wanted to do it more and more. Movement became our language.

Two years ago I saw Shania was playing at a festival and I thought, "I've got to take Mum." She gets nervous in crowds, but I decided to risk it. I bought her a cowboy hat. She had the time of her life. She was dancing around, singing, crying, people were dancing with her — she didn't want to leave. To this day she remembers it. It made me realise there's still so much happiness to be had. She still laughs. She still dances. She can still feel. But you do have to create those moments.

Until Mum became ill she was the glue of our family. There was such a change in the role she played for all of us. With early-onset Alzheimer's, initial signs can involve non-memory issues such as depression or a change in personality — which Mum experienced. At least six years before she was diagnosed in 2020 there were striking shifts in her character.

> "As soon as we got her moving or dancing her cognition improved. She'd get a spark in her eyes

She'd always been full of life, a person who lights up a room. She became very aggressive, pushing the family away, wanting to be alone. Then she grew depressed, extremely quiet and withdrawn. Financial issues came to light. It was all so unlike her, and disconcerting for me and my brother. Now I suspect that it may have contributed to the breakdown of my parents' marriage. She and Dad split when I was 16.

After the divorce she started making decisions, including moving up north to where she grew up and then changing her mind after a few months. Her behaviour was erratic and, unsure how to deal with it, we stepped back. She and I didn't speak for two years.

It was very difficult. She'd always been so nurturing. It felt as though our whole world had been shaken upside down and we didn't know the mum we'd once had. I think that's why it's all so painful now. I feel we were robbed of her long before the diagnosis.

Our lack of relationship made me feel powerless. I took control back through how I looked and trained and what I ate. It became obsessive, and I had anorexia for a while. It was hard for Mum to see me struggling. These days I'm conscious of my wellbeing because Mum having Alzheimer's is another situation I can't control.

Now, aged 32, I regret that we clashed. I think, "What a waste." But I was a teenager. I didn't see what was coming. We could all have been much more supportive had we known. Now all I want to do is hug her and look after her.

We first took her for tests ten years ago, but it took five years for her to be correctly diagnosed. Doctors said her mood shifts were probably depression, a midlife crisis or the menopause. Her illness could have been caught earlier, but medics were very firm that she'd just gone through a breakdown. She was put on antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication. Scarily, I now know that middle-aged women being misdiagnosed is a massive issue, which I really want other people to be aware of.

Mum was officially diagnosed in 2020, the year of lockdowns. She was living alone and was very much aware of the diagnosis. It was terrifying for her. I was based in London and remember her WhatsApping me, telling me how low, how sad, how scared she was. We were almost wishing for the time when she didn't know.

Her diagnosis felt particularly savage because you don't expect someone to develop Alzheimer's that young. You then know you'll have a lifelong feeling of anticipatory grief. You have no idea of the end date — not that you want an end date — but you have no control. We always felt safe with Mum. Now all that is gone. I wish we'd known about it sooner. We could have perhaps prepared ourselves more.

I threw myself into my business to distract myself. Movement has always been my medicine, and I started doing live online workouts, building up a community of women over five years. If ever I was feeling sad about Mum I'd work out, scroll or create a video. I was always batting away the emotions. This time last year I hit burnout. I realised I needed to spend more time with Mum. So many more emotions

JOHN ANGERSON FOR THE TIMES. HAIR AND MAKE-UP ISABEL WHILE

Talilla Henchoz and her mother, Debbie

I'm twice the age of Spider-Man, but I still took on his hardcore fitness challenge

are coming up now I've slowed down. Everything hits harder.

Mum has carers that come in three times a day. They get her dressed, shower her, give her her medication, cook her food. She can no longer use her phone and doesn't know what day it is. But when I go to see her I'll put on Shania, we'll boogie around the kitchen or go on a country walk. It's like bootcamp when I go home. She does get out of breath but I know she loves it. It changes her mood.

I even take her to the gym. The first time I wasn't great. I was impatient and frustrated. She struggled to understand what we were doing, even though before her illness she'd trained in gyms her entire life. She didn't recognise herself in the gym mirror. I wasn't embarrassed but I was very conscious of everyone around us watching. Then you realise that people are inspired by her.

We use light dumbbells. I tell her, "You need those weights to get stronger." We'll do lateral raises and most of the time she'll follow my instructions — "straight arms!" — though her attention does wander. I encourage every rep, and keep it fun; as she raises her arms I'll say, "It's like you're flying!" And then we do squats together: "Sit down, all the way to the bench." It's been a real lesson. Nothing else matters apart from Mum's happiness and health.

My auntie has a stables and takes her horse riding twice a week. It was terrifying at first. But Mum loves it. She goes on 30-minute hacks — it lights her up.

Last year I drove her and my Nan — her 85-year-old mother, who is cognitively pin-sharp — down to our family holiday cottage in Wales. We've gone there since I was a kid and it is very beautiful, and Mum's special place. She was quite out of it but when we arrived there were tears in her eyes. She couldn't express that she knew it, but we felt it.

That week was devastating and heartbreaking and draining — but it taught us to grab every opportunity. Mum dragged me into the freezing ocean. I said, "It's too cold, Mum," but she was determined, like a child. She was wearing a little red swimsuit and stayed in the sea dancing around for half an hour. Nan and I sat on the beach on chairs wrapped in blankets. Nan said, "I've never seen our Debbie like this." She was in her element. It was a reminder that you have to push through those awkward feelings of "it's not going to be right" or "it's too hard" to get these beautiful moments.

Because every single day it's so difficult. I know so many families living with this and going through it so quietly. It can feel so isolating. I want to share Mum's story in a way that respects her dignity, in the hope that it inspires others.

I want to change the conversation around dementia to include the possibilities — not being only about the decline, the inevitable heartbreak and the unimaginable hard days ahead, which I know are coming.

Even if she forgets who we are there will be glimmers — and we have to hold onto those little moments. We can still help Mum live the life she deserves. Because every time we dance, walk, work out or splash in the ocean it makes me realise there's still laughter, there's still connection. There's still love.

As told to Anna Maxted. Talilla Henchoz is a health and fitness coach @talillahenchoz

About ten minutes in I started to lose all sense of who I was, or really that I was a person at all. I didn't feel exhausted, I actually became exhaustion — there was no other sensation or thought. I tried the actor Tom Holland's go-to workout, and now typing this is making my forearms hurt.

The Spider-Man star told Men's Health magazine that he likes to do a bodyweight challenge called the Cindy. The workout was created by the CrossFit group. Taking their lead from the way storms are given women's names, they decided to call their benchmark workouts Barbara, Chelsea, Diane etc. These are known as "the girls". They sound like people you could meet at a party thrown by Joan Collins, but don't let that deceive you: the girls are mean — and Cindy is particularly cruel.

She consists of 5 pull-ups, 10 push-ups and 15 squats for as many rounds as you can manage in 20 minutes. Holland says he has completed 27 rounds and, looking at his ripped, lean superhero physique I believe him. It's a cleverly conceived workout because each move hits a different area, so your chest has a chance to recover from the push-ups while you use your legs for the squats and so on. It's a whole-body process: push-ups predominantly work the chest and the back of your arms, squats hit your legs and bottom, pull-ups engage your back.

For many people the pull-ups are a blocker, but if you can't do a pull-up that needn't stop you trying Holland's routine. Most facilities with a pull-up bar will have a lower bar at chest height — use this to make a more doable version of the exercise by holding the bar and placing your feet on the floor in front of you, pulling yourself up from there. You will still be performing a comparable exercise but not lifting your entire weight.

The real issue is that 20 minutes is a great stretch of time for an educational talk or a catch-up with an old friend, but for a strength workout it's an instrument of torture.

I undertook my Cindy at 10.30am before the heat kicked in. I was, I admit, a little nervous. My prep was a double espresso, loads of water, a bowl of yoghurt with berries and some energising American punk — Holland is a Linkin Park fan.

For the first five minutes Cindy and I were getting on well. My pace was even and I was roughly managing a round a minute. Roughly seven minutes in the pull-ups started to become tiresome and draining. The push-ups and squats didn't leave me enough time to recover and I had to start pausing, my score drifting away.

By 12 minutes I was living in a zone where I was literally waiting to be able to move again — constantly edging in and out of the limits of my muscular endurance. The final stretch meant the last threads of sentient thought telling me to go again and stop hanging around. To give you some idea of how tired I was, counting to five was becoming challenging in itself.

I managed 13 rounds with full pull-ups — intermediate level, according to the CrossFit site. Pride forces me to say that I am 62 — that's 32 years older than Tom Holland.

> "It's a cleverly conceived workout as each move hits a different area

If you're not a crazed fitness bunny (a badge I wear with pride), I suggest aiming for as many rounds as possible, but make the sets shorter and swap the pull-ups for an easier move. The format is great: it keeps your work rate up, builds endurance and strength, and requires genuine grit. It doesn't really matter if you do five push-ups, six squats and two feet-on-the-floor pull-ups, as long as you push hard and do your best for the time you've set yourself.

Once I was done I felt as if I'd been on a tremendous, character-building microadventure that took only 20 minutes and a walk to my local park. I'm fairly sure I'll regain the use of my forearms soon.

Tom Holland as Spider-Man, left, and Phil Hilton

We share a life, a home and a son, but we've never been a couple

Novelist Katy Regan and her best friend never dated, but had a baby. Now they've moved in together

Last month I went to my son's graduation in Liverpool with his dad, Louis, and got talking to some other parents in the auditorium. They'd come from opposite ends of the country, as they were no longer together. ("I got rid of him *years* ago," the mum whispered conspiratorially.) I wasn't sure how to explain that Louis and I aren't together either — but we recently moved in with each other again.

To clarify, we're not getting "back together" because we were not a couple in the first place. I have never known how to explain mine and Louis's relationship. He's not my ex because we were never married, or even an item. Friend seems inadequate to describe how much he means to me. Sometimes I call him my baby-daddy, but that makes it sound as if I met him on a co-parenting website. There doesn't seem to be a term to describe the man I share a 21-year-old son, a life and a lot of love with — just not of the sexual or romantic kind (he has a girlfriend for that).

Louis and I met in 2002 when I was 27 and he was 33. He was the photographer assigned to the story I was writing for the magazine I worked on at the time. It was friendship at first sight; we just hit it off, and went on many fabulous trips as a professional duo. I loved his creative energy — I still do. He remains one of the most curious, least self-absorbed people I've ever met. Although we wished it were different, we just weren't each other's type.

Clearly for us to be sitting at our son's graduation there was a friends-with-benefits period (for want of a better expression) before we became friends-having-a-baby, when I found out I was pregnant at the age of 29 in March 2004, then parents to our unplanned but very much wanted son, Fergus, that December.

People assumed that we would make it work as a couple, but we didn't want to force something "for the baby" only to split up later and subject him to the fallout.

We decided right from the off that we would co-parent, splitting the care of Fergus down the middle. The thing I worried about most was not being a single parent (although I did worry about that, and whether anyone else would "want" me with a child in tow) but whether our friendship, which meant so much to me and existed before Fergus came along, would survive the rocky road of parenthood.

> "Having a baby is hard. Without the glue of sex and romance, how would we survive?

I'd heard that the first year with a new baby was the hardest for most couples. How would we, without the glue of sex and romance, survive? It has not always been easy, but that our friendship has not only survived but thrived has been the best surprise of my life. Now I'm 52 I wish I could go to that scared, pregnant 30-year-old and tell her it was all going to be OK.

I was living in a singles party house when I fell pregnant but moved in with Louis (separate bedrooms obviously) at seven months. It was lovely — not to mention helpful — to share that newborn stage with the only other person in the world who loved our baby as much as I did.

When Fergus was ten months old I bought and moved into my own flat on the opposite side of the road to Louis. Then, when Fergus was four, we did the clichéd move from London to the suburbs for the schools — "together apart" as we called it: living at walking-distance ends of the same Hertfordshire town.

We did date other people and have relationships — admittedly this was more Louis; I seem to have prioritised other things, like writing books — but neither of us married or moved in with other partners. We remained friends and spent time as a family regularly. Because we both did the school run we ended up making friends with the same parents, so sometimes socialised with them too.

Louis's parents died a long time ago, so we've always spent Christmas up north with my parents and sisters, where he is accepted as part of our family. We've been on several holidays as a family of three and are about to go to Kenya for a mutual friend's wedding. Some romantic partners have understandably found our closeness tricky, but once they understand there's zero sexual or romantic threat it's fine. Besides, they've sometimes had their own unconventional family set-ups too.

So, what are we now? Empty-nester co-parents? Housemates? I don't suppose it matters, but it would be nice to have a term that recognises the significance of our relationship since to all intents and purposes Louis is my significant other.

That said, our reasons for moving in together were largely financial. We were both struggling to run two houses on freelance creative incomes, particularly me. I rented a lovely flat on my writer's income for nine years, which was a miracle and a strain, until it became impossible. Louis's house, which he has owned for ten years, was down the road, and since we get on so well, pooling our resources made sense.

I feel incredibly lucky I have this option. I pay him rent and we share bills, which seems like a win-win situation. If we'd been warring divorcees, or even just divorcees, this wouldn't have been possible.

That's not to say we don't bicker and get on each other's nerves — like any other relationship, we have to work at it. Also, we have strategies, such as separate living spaces and, of course, separate bedrooms. Many of my married friends joke that we have the ideal set-up: all the companionship without the pressure of "we should really have sex at some point". I am aware that friendship is what some marriages become in the end — and maybe only if you're lucky. I've seen plenty of couples separate or divorce in the past few years. At the risk of sounding like a smug non-married, I do feel a kind of lightness that I don't have this to worry about. Perhaps this is the best marriage we never had?

It's hard for me to see our situation as unusual because it's all I'm used to. Fergus didn't bat an eyelid when we moved in together. He was in his second year at university at that point, so had basically moved out anyway. "I definitely want to have kids," he said recently when we asked him the dreaded "met anyone nice?"

On holiday in Spain in 2005, when Fergus was nine months old

JOHN ANGERSON FOR THE TIMES. HAIR AND MAKE-UP SARAH BULLETT

Katy Regan with Louis and Fergus

question. "But I'm not bothered about the whole marriage thing. Actually, I kind of like what you two have got. You seem to have all the good stuff about a relationship but without the risk. I mean, you were never going to get divorced, were you? I never had to worry about that."

Obviously on some level this was music to our ears, but sometimes we wonder if we've modelled this set-up a little too well. After all, we don't want Fergus to miss out on the whole fireworks of falling in love in the traditional sense. We have never tried to sell our set-up as one we'd recommend — simply one we made the best of.

This is the second summer we've lived together, and I don't have many complaints. We argue about our differing tidiness standards and tastes in TV, and Louis's obsession with storage drives me a bit mad. As our friends say, "You are the most married unmarried non-couple we know." And they are probably right.

The question I get asked most is: what happens when you meet someone? When Louis's lovely girlfriend of almost two years came to stay (he usually goes to hers), I made myself scarce. I think she did find our relationship strange at first, but once she understood it's just friendship it was OK. She lives in a different country too, which obviously makes things easier.

I'm open to a romantic relationship of my own, but in all honesty I just can't bring myself to "do the apps". Besides, whatever relationship I have in the future would have to be as well as, not instead of, the one I have with Louis. As I see it, they're just different kinds of love. Why can't there be room for more of that in both of our lives?

***How to Find Your Way Home* by Katy Regan (Pan Macmillan £9.99)**

I was diagnosed with ADHD — here's why I don't accept it

Dr Max Pemberton was prescribed drugs after a private consultation as part of a TV investigation

CHRISTOPHER L PROCTOR FOR THE TIMES

Max Pemberton

An hour after I swallowed the pill I walked to my local shop and stared blankly at the man behind the counter. I could see him working out whether he'd offended me. The tablet was lisdexamfetamine, an amphetamine, and one of the drugs we give to children and adults with ADHD. I'd taken it because I had been diagnosed with the condition myself at the age of 46, after more than 20 years as a psychiatrist.

I was making a documentary about why ADHD diagnoses have risen so steeply over the past few years and I wanted to know what going through an assessment was actually like. I didn't really think I'd end up actually being diagnosed with it.

The production company paid £1,200 for an online consultation and I picked a reputable company who employed a consultant psychiatrist with considerable experience, because this wasn't about finding rogue clinics but rather understanding the process that thousands go through each year.

I sat in my flat in front of a laptop, as most people now do, and answered the hour and a half of questions she asked me. At the end of it all, to my slight shock, I was told I had ADHD, combined type, the full set of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity, and was prescribed a month of medication. I reject the diagnosis and I'll come to why, but something happened in the days afterwards that I wasn't remotely prepared for.

I started to hear a little voice in my mind. I'd forget where I'd put my phone, or realise I had read the same paragraph four times and the voice would say, "Is that my ADHD?" Nothing about me had changed. I'd lost my phone the week before and thought nothing of it, but now every ordinary human failure came with a footnote.

Sociologists call this labelling; the process by which a description hardens into an identity and then begins to generate the very behaviour it claimed only to observe. Medicine has its own version — "diagnostic overshadowing", where a label is attached and every subsequent difficulty is seen through this prism. What unsettled me was how quickly it got in my head.

Because I do have the traits. My timekeeping is so poor that a friend holding a party on a boat once sent me an invitation with an hour-earlier departure time, on the assumption that I'd otherwise be waving at the stern from the quay. I lose my phone several times a day and, left to myself, would go to sleep at 4am. I fidget and have to stop myself when I'm with a patient. I work at home to hard techno, because the noise stops my mind wandering off.

What I've done, over many years, is develop strategies. Everything goes in the diary with alarms for when I need to leave. Every evening I write the next day's tasks on an index card, carry it in my pocket and cross them off. Without it there is chaos.

To me, this is a life being managed, which I'd suggest is what most lives consist of, because we are all dealt a hand and spend our time working out how to play it. My traits have infuriated me at times, but they've also given me a medical career I love, several books, a career in journalism, a company I run, and the energy that gets all of it done. Calling that a disability, as I was told during my assessment, borrows a word that other people need.

What I find strange is that everywhere else in psychiatry we take a person's circumstances seriously and understand that the world someone lives in can impact on how they feel and behave. No competent doctor treating a depressed woman would disregard the fact that she has been made redundant, or hasn't slept since the baby arrived, and we'd think it negligent to hand her a prescription and not consider the environmental, psychological and social factors. With ADHD that habit has been mislaid and we have settled on the idea that the difficulty sits inside the child and the world around him is beside the point.

> "The tablets left me like a zombie. I could work but felt dulled and flattened

Yet look at the world we've built for him. The criteria have widened over the years, so behaviour once thought unremarkable now falls inside the diagnosis. We've handed children devices engineered to capture their attention and then fragment it and built an education system that measures them by how still they sit and how well they do in exams. We've given everybody a way of comparing their chaotic inner lives with others' edited outer ones, leaving them convinced that everyone else is coping and they alone are not. My film examines all of this and I came away thinking that if you set out to manufacture a population with attention difficulties, you'd build something close to the world we live in. Now we diagnose those who struggle in it.

Which brings me to the most hopeful thing anybody said to me while making the film. Professor Katya Rubia at King's College London has spent 30 years scanning the brains of people with ADHD. She told me that no scan will tell you who has it, because, as she put it, "it's a concept which is based on behaviour".

Then she said the thing we almost never hear, which is that the brain is highly plastic, that brain and behaviour are two sides of one coin and that when behaviour changes, the brain changes with it. So even where a difference shows up, it may be the result of how a child has been living rather than the cause of it, and it isn't fixed. Nor is there an ADHD gene — only small parts of genes, each of vanishingly small effect and most turning up in depression, autism and schizophrenia too.

Which brings me back to the drug. In the film I took a single dose. Some weeks later I decided a day wasn't a fair test so I'd take the rest. I managed three weeks. I hated every moment. I'd assumed the zombie comparison people make meant sleepy and it isn't that at all. I could sit and work without getting up, which was novel, but I was dulled and flattened, as though somebody had turned the colour down. My thoughts came more slowly, I wasn't curious about anything and nothing struck me as funny. I write for a living and I could feel that going, which is what finished it, because the slightly frantic way I have of being helps me get everything done. I stopped and I wouldn't take it again.

Had I been given the diagnosis 30 years ago I'm not sure I'd have bothered building the strategies I rely on every day. Why would you, if you've been told there's something wrong with you and nothing to be done but take the tablets? I'm not arguing that nobody should. There are people whose attention and impulsivity are so overwhelming that day-to-day life is beyond them, and if the medication helps them, I'd never take it away. But I don't believe millions of us have been ill all along and are only now being noticed, and I think we have stopped asking what we are doing to our children, because a prescription is quicker and easier.

***The Great ADHD Myth?* is on Channel 4 on Tuesday at 8pm**

Heatwaves have ruined our sex life

Dr Suzi Godson
Sex counsel

Q Our sex life has really suffered this summer. We've been too hot and bothered in bed to be intimate, then short-tempered from lack of sleep (and/or sex). I'm surprised by how quickly the disconnect in our bedroom has shown up outside it, and I'm worried it's doing damage to our relationship. What can we do?

A Given the nature of British weather, it's possible that by the time this column is published you will be wearing a sweater and your problems will have resolved. According to my weather app, however, the hot weather is not due to end any time soon, so I will speak to the sunshine that I see outside and the issues you've been facing.

I am sure you're not the only ones who are having a sexual drought this summer. Sleep takes a hit in the heat, and sex invariably suffers too. It is hard enough controlling your body temperature without having someone else's sweaty body beside you making you feel even hotter.

Sex is obviously important, but not as essential as sleep, and when exhaustion becomes irritability you need to address the temperature in your bedroom. At night core body temperature drops by 2-3 degrees to trigger the production of melatonin, which helps you to fall asleep. The ideal temperature for a bedroom is 18.3C — warmer than that makes it harder for your body temperature to drop naturally and harder to fall asleep. Better thermoregulation will improve emotional regulation, so start by making your bedroom cooler. A bucket of ice in front of your fan. Keeping your room dark during the day. A lukewarm shower before bed. Egyptian cotton sheets. Getting a good night's sleep will improve your mood and help you to feel less crotchety with each other.

I'd also note that emotional intimacy doesn't have to involve sex. Holding hands and making each other laugh while you lie naked and helpless under an icy fan still makes for an intimate, connected and memorable experience.

Still, there are ways to make sex feel cooler too. Choosing positions that minimise close body contact can make a big difference. Now might be the time to try using a position where contact is confined to the essentials. You even could introduce cooling props. Putting an ice cube in your mouth can totally change the sensations. Moving a melting ice cube over warm skin can feel fantastic. If you are using sex toys, keeping them in the freezer has the dual benefit of cooling you down and heightening sensation.

You should aim to have sex at the coolest time of the day. Temperatures are lowest just before sunrise. This is also when your body temperature is at its lowest. This would require discipline of course — going to bed earlier and setting an alarm to have sex in the early hours — but the rewards are huge. Studies have shown that having an orgasm helps you fall asleep faster, stay asleep longer and enjoy better quality sleep, even if you have a nap earlier in the day. Orgasm increases the level of oxytocin, making you feel more relaxed; endorphins calm the nervous system. A 6am orgasm will increase sexual and emotional intimacy and help you to achieve a deeper sleep that night — worth the early start, I'd say.

> "You should consider aiming to have sex at the coolest time of the day

Send your questions to weekendsex@thetimes.com

Men's health

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Katie Derham

The Proms songs? Times change and so do values

Broadcaster Katie Derham, 56, talks to Stephen Armstrong about evolving musical traditions

Katie Derham's X account profile starts with two words: Prom Queen. And while there may be teenage prom queens all over the country, she's the only one who has held the title for 16 years, presenting the BBC's TV coverage of the season and jointly hosting on Radio 3.

Derham is happily iconoclastic about the event, which next year will have been hosted by the BBC for 100 years. "The Proms have always been about trying to lure in new audiences, so every year people get a bit sniffy when we have Sam Smith or Florence + the Machine, or this year's prog rock Prom," she says, smiling. "The disco Prom last year was phenomenal. It could have been super-cringe, but it really wasn't. Everybody was dancing, and nobody could complain about that."

She carefully navigates the continuing debate about the lyrics of the Last Night of the Proms anthems, which she has previously described as "incredibly problematic". "In the last few years there have been discussions around the lyrics of *Rule, Britannia!*. That's as it should be," she says, nodding. "I made a documentary about *Land of Hope and Glory*'s writers Arthur Benson and Elgar, and they tried to disassociate themselves when it was picked up by the jingoist First World War crowd. Times change, values change and we should discuss it. It's happy people having a lovely time, but those lyrics may affect some of the performers. Everything's better when we all talk about it."

Sitting in Broadcasting House dressed in a pink T-shirt, chinos and silver sandals, Derham, 56, is not your typical classical music buff. She met her husband, John Vincent, cofounder of the healthy fast food chain Leon, when she climbed over the wall of her University of Cambridge college to gatecrash the summer ball. When discussing 2014's Ibiza Prom — with the DJ Pete Tong, the conductor Jules Buckley and the Heritage Orchestra playing versions of Faithless and Fat Boy Slim tracks — she recalls "a lot of people of my vintage reliving our misspent youths, hands in the air".

Are former national newsreaders allowed to have misspent youths? She became the youngest national newscaster on British TV when she joined ITN at the age of 27. She grins. "I was media and arts correspondent [when] they said, 'We might need cover for weekend bulletins.' I was new, so I said yes." She laughs. "I was doing that through to 2010, still in the culture of Trevor McDonald saying good night and the nation going to bed. You needed to be good."

Derham with her husband, John Vincent

Women were under a particular kind of scrutiny. "My colleague Dermot Murnaghan died in July, and I got my scrapbook out then saw these headlines about 'the battle of the autocuties', as if women weren't up to the job. So old-fashioned."

When she graduated in 1991 with a degree in economics from Cambridge the economy was bleak. She worked as a secretary at the Westminster Chamber of Commerce then secured a similar job at the BBC in Manchester.

She'd grown up, she says, in a loving, busy house with parents who were keen on homework and hard work.

Derham's father, John, was a chemist and her mother, Margaret, a French teacher before she was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's at 56. "She was far too young," Derham says, shaking her head slightly. "She was a great one for a pun and wordplay and a crossword. Language is the first stuff to go. At the time it made me angry."

She still ties herself in knots about not having been more present to help her dad as her mum declined. Today Derham is actively involved with Dementia UK, serving as a patron for Arts for Dementia and for the St Peter & St James Hospice, but she was in her late twenties and early thirties when her mum got really ill. She was building her career, starting her family — her elder daughter was born in 2000, three years before Margaret died — and she knew her mum would expect her to "crack on with that", she says, smiling softly. "It's what I would say to my children as well — 'I don't want you moving back home and being sad around the house.'"

I explain that my mum has Alzheimer's and has just gone into residential accommodation. "Losing your parents is never, never a straightforward thing," Derham says. "I didn't realise how physical it could become. That was the thing I found really shocking with Mum. The personality changes, and the memory — I expected that. But when she stopped being able to walk..."

Derham is the age her mum was when she was diagnosed, and five years younger than when she died. "It does give you pause," she says. "But I've been told by doctors that if you've lost your keys, you're tired. If you don't know what your keys are for, that's when you should start to worry. I think that's quite reassuring, especially as we all suffer with brain fog and tiredness."

She still has moments when she wishes her mum were here to see something happen — and she wishes her mum had met her younger daughter, Eleanor, now 21 and a music major at New York University, following in the footsteps of her older sister. "It was a straightforward sliding doors moment," Derham explains. "We took the kids on holiday just as our eldest daughter, Natasha, now 26, was applying for universities in the UK. It was Christmas, we went to see *Hamilton*, all very exciting, and she asked if she could look at some of the colleges."

NYU is on Broadway. Natasha wanted to study drama, and the US liberal arts degree system meant she'd do 60 per cent of her time on that and the rest on political science or African literature. "John and I just thought it would be a shame to say no," she says with a shrug. "Five years later Ellie wanted to go too. I looked at the state of tertiary education here. I have a lot of connections still with my old university and everything is in a state of flux here. It is very challenging — don't get me started on student loans — so it made sense, but the downside for me was that they were in the States a lot."

Natasha is back now and carving out a career in comedy. "I think it's really exciting for her generation — they're reinventing it," Derham says. "They're doing amazing things online. She'll suddenly say, 'I've just been followed by somebody on *SNL UK*.'" Does she do any material on her mum? She pauses briefly. "I don't think so, but I wouldn't put it past her."

And her daughters are the reason she stays fit — "not for the camera, God no, I've never been massively fussed about that. I want to stay well and healthy, have mental acuity, still be able to have a laugh and still be able to play with my future grandchildren." She beams. "I'd really like to go on sailing holidays when I'm in my seventies and eighties."

The family home is in Sussex, so gardening and walks are her main exercise. "Right now I'm only watering the vegetable plot," she says. "We're not technically under a hosepipe ban, but you feel you have to be careful. Everything is crispy in my garden right now." And she enjoys a gentle run. "A chat with mates, wearing trainers, is how you'd describe my running," she admits. "One day I'll do the South Downs Way. Maybe that's a retirement goal."

She shows no sign of contemplating retirement, of course. Before we meet she has had a pitch meeting in Soho — "very chilled" — and she delights in stats about how the Proms are getting younger. Some 300,000 people saw a Prom last year, 40 per cent of them were under 40 and more than 50 per cent first-timers. Is this her mission, to get younger people involved? "Haven't you worked it out by now?" She seems slightly disappointed. "It's about that, but it's about giving everyone my passion. I'm not emotional about that many things, but what I do love, I love passionately."

The BBC Proms runs until Sep 12. Promming tickets are £8 (including fees), available on the day of the concert, and seated tickets start at £12.20, bbc.co.uk/proms. Proms programmes are available to watch on BBC TV and iPlayer

Katie Derham's perfect weekend

Lark or owl?
Very much owl.

Tiger mum or free-range parent?
I tried hard to be free-range, but I was brought up by a tiger mum.

Signature dish?
My girls still refer to the casserole years. The working mum is saved by the slow cooker.

I couldn't get through the weekend without...
...my vegetable plot.

Escape to the woods! Best huts

From chic huts with a sauna to Michelin-starred glamping: Emily Sargent picks the top stays

Holly Water Cabin
Crediton, Devon

On the outer reaches of a working family farm, this cabin is in a blissfully quiet spot. Enormous sliding glass doors open out onto the front deck, where you'll find a copper outdoor bath and fire pit, while inside there is a full kitchen, a luxurious bathroom with plush bathrobes, a log-burner and a huge window overlooking fields and trees at the foot of the kingsize bed. Guests can expect a welcome hamper of tea, coffee and breakfast supplies including eggs, butter, milk, bacon, honey, homemade granola and fresh bread — but there is also a great farm shop nearby and an excellent pub, the Ring of Bells, serving locally sourced food including freshly caught fish from day boats down in Newlyn (theringofbells.com).
Details A two-night stay for two costs from £340 (hollywatercabin.co.uk)

Wild by Nature
near Hay-on-Wye, Powys

In a lush valley bordered by the Black Mountains, food is a highlight during a stay at one of these four wooden huts — all within the grounds of the Michelin-accredited pub the Bull's Head. The simple but chic cabins feature kingsize beds, a lounge area overlooking meadows, a bathroom with large walk-in showers and an outdoor deck area to soak in the views. In a quiet spot beside the River Wye you'll find the site's sauna, while Hay-on-Wye is 25 minutes away by car, if you fancy an afternoon of pottering in bookshops and cafés, or a top-quality meal at the excellent green Michelin-starred Chapters (chaptershayonwye.co.uk). Back at the Bull's Head, the traditional pub has flagstone floors, slate walls and excellent food, much of which is sourced locally, including meat from the owners' farm. Dishes might include Welsh rarebit croquettes (£4.50), followed by Marches mushroom ragu with polenta, wild garlic and parmesan (£26). In-cabin massages can also be booked with a local therapist.
Details A one-night stay for two, including breakfast, costs from £215 and a one-night stay for two, including breakfast and dinner, costs from £315 (wildbynaturellp.com)

Rest and Wild Cabins
near Masham, Yorkshire Dales

Hidden among towering pine trees in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales National Park you will find five chic, black-clad cabins. Each one comes with an outdoor copper bath, as well as kingsize beds with linen sheets positioned so that you wake to fabulous views from the cabins' huge picture windows. Try one of the many beautiful walks from the front door, explore picturesque market squares and historic pubs in nearby villages including Masham and Leyburn (be sure to visit the Black Swan here to try its handmade pies), or take a refreshing dip in nearby Cauldron Falls waterfall and pool. Breakfast and dinner hampers can be pre-ordered and contain everything you need for a slap-up meal that can be cooked over the cabin's outdoor fire pit.
Details A two-night stay for two costs from £350 (restandwild.co)

Yogi's Cabin
Catsfield, East Sussex

This black Scandi-style cabin just became the latest to join the collection at Great Park Farm, a family-run nursery and farm shop that also hosts a number of luxury cabins and a sauna in the woods. Take a dip in the cabin's private wild swimming lake, after which you can warm up around the fire pit, or in an outdoor bath gazing out at the surrounding trees. The cabins were designed by a local architect and everything inside is handmade, and the cost of a stay includes a programme of yoga classes in your own studio at the centre of the cabin, which can be tailored to your experience (and energy). They are taught either in person or online, depending on what you prefer. Breakfast is a hamper of fruit, yoghurt, granola and honey, plus fresh bread, butter and jam — but you'll also have the option to stock up at the on-site farm shop, which sells barbecue boxes, luxury picnic hampers, scones, cakes, fresh produce and gourmet ready meals.
Details A one-night stay for two costs from £310 (architects.holiday)

Knotting Hill Barn House near Ashby Folville, Leicestershire

Hidden away among 11 acres of beautiful woodland, this cabin made from reclaimed wood sleeps up to eight people with a camping glade nearby that has space for three tents, making it perfect for small groups. Luxurious bathrooms inside come with copper taps, marble surfaces and heated floors, but the star of the show is a spacious living area with vast bifold doors that open on each side to fabulous countryside views. Outdoors, you'll find a barbecue fire pit, pizza oven and wood-fired hot tub, plus a wild swimming lake with canoes — perfect for whiling away a sunny afternoon. And if you don't feel like cooking in the cabin's stylish kitchen at the end of the day, there's an option to book a private chef for your stay.
Details A one-night stay for eight costs from £440 (an extra £20 per person per night if camping; knottinghillbarnhouse.com)

Craftsman's Cabin
Martock, Somerset

In a peaceful meadow on the edge of the Somerset Levels surrounded by traditional apple orchards, it's clear that this stylish wood cabin filled with handpicked art and ceramics was created by an interior designer. Guests are greeted by a hamper of local foodie treats, such as fresh sourdough bread from the hosts' favourite bakery, ground coffee, locally made jam and free-range eggs. The Wyndham Arms is a lovely pub a few minutes' walk away in the picturesque village of Kingsbury Episcopi with regular live music (wyndhamarms.com) — or, if you prefer to return to the peace of the cabin, there are fabulous sunsets and vast skies to be seen from its freestanding outdoor bath before settling in around the fire pit.
Details A one-night stay for up to four costs from £170 (craftsmanscabin.co.uk)

Aller, Dorset

Great British summer

> "Hampers with steak or lobster tails can be ordered to be cooked over your fire pit

Elmley Nature Reserve cabins
Isle of Sheppey, Kent

Sitting on the deck of one of Elmley's shepherd's huts and cabins looking out across the 3,300-acre nature reserve, it is hard to believe you are only an hour from London. Each is slightly different, but many come with outdoor baths, a fire pit and floor-to-ceiling windows that take in panoramic views across this beautiful wilderness. Wildlife tours can be booked with Elmley's in-house nature guides, while breakfast and supper hampers can be pre-ordered to your front door, as well as packed lunches for days spent exploring. Take a short stroll to the Farmyard in the evening — keeping an eye out for barn owls gliding over the fields — for excellent wood-fired pizza in a sunny courtyard.
Details A one-night stay for two costs from £160 (elmleynaturereserve.co.uk)

Callow Hall Hives
Ashbourne, Derbyshire

Set within the 35 acres of woodland and meadows that surround this chic country house hotel are Callow Hall's "hives" — 11 secluded treehouses made from reclaimed timber. Inside, the feel is one of rustic luxury, with kingsize beds, wooden-clad walls, rainfall showers and plush bathrobes, while outside, each cabin has its own private deck with views through the treetops. Breakfast hampers containing fresh pastries, locally made butter, jams, cheeses and granola can be ordered to the door (£12.50pp) — or, if you'd prefer a full breakfast menu you're a short walk from the main house, with its restaurant, bar and spa treatments. Wildhive's second property, Eshott Hall, will be opening in Northumberland this summer and will have similarly luxurious cabins dotted about its grounds.
Details A one-night stay for two costs from £340 (wildhive.uk)

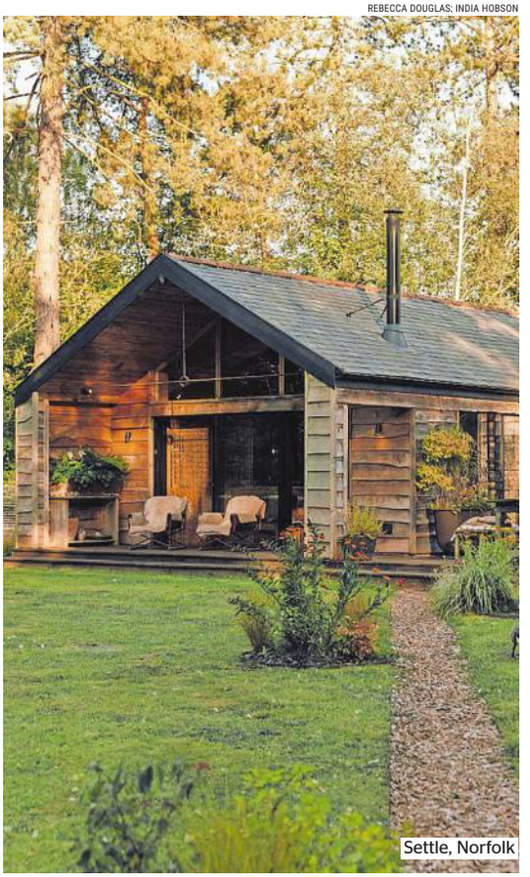
Knepp Estate Glamping
Horsham, West Sussex

Set within 3,500 acres of one of the UK's biggest rewilding projects, an incredible range of wildlife can be spotted from any one of the treehouses, shepherd's huts and cabins at Knepp — all tucked away in a peaceful wildflower meadow on the edge of ancient woodlands. Look out for white storks circling overhead, free-roaming ponies, deer and pigs, and listen for nightingales and owls at night. There is a wood-fired sauna and a

and cabins for a wild(ish) break

REBECCA DOUGLAS; INDIA HOBSON

Elmley Nature Reserve, Kent



Settle, Norfolk

secluded wild swimming pond, plus guided nature walks across the estate and workshops on rewilding your garden. The site's green Michelin star-accredited restaurant is open on Saturday evenings (as well as daily for breakfast and lunch), serving ingredients from the estate such as in its Knepp charcuterie with garden pickles (£12), while on Friday nights there are relaxed barbecue evenings in the courtyard with live music — plus an on-site shop selling plenty of goodies to keep you well stocked.
Details A two-night stay for two costs from £315 (knepp.co.uk)

Aller Dorchester, Dorset

These four shepherd's huts may be located on a working family farm, but with a founder who previously worked in PR at Gucci, this is glamping at its most luxe. The huts were built, for example, by local carpenters who have also worked with the Pig hotels and are decked out in Farrow & Ball paint. Each comes with plush robes, wood-burning stoves and secluded outdoor baths with fabulous views. If you're feeling active, yoga and reflexology sessions are available, as well as wild swimming lakes (Zoulands hut comes with its own private spring-fed lake) and a tennis court on site. Dinner hampers can be ordered to be cooked over your fire pit; this might include locally sourced steak, lobster tails, burrata with burnt oranges, pistachios and mint, baby jacket potatoes wrapped in foil, and a chocolate mousse to finish (£120 for two). Breakfast is just as much of a treat, with a range of options including local bacon, eggs, smoked trout, avocado and juices delivered to your door (£25 for two).
Details A one-night stay for two costs from £185 (allerdorset.com)

Settle Attleborough, Norfolk

Surrounded by 30 acres of private parkland on the edge of Thetford Forest, you will find three restored railway carriages and a luxurious wooden cabin with gorgeous views from its private deck over a lilypad-topped lake. Though all of the accommodation is beautifully done, the cabin is the showstopper, with a super-kingsize bed, a wood-fired outdoor bath and two yoga decks. Breakfast is served in a hamper containing sourdough bread, local butter, fresh coffee, organic oats and local free-range eggs. An on-site store packed with delicious deli and bakery items, fresh produce, plus a range of posh, locally made ready meals (if you can call them that) and pizzas, is also on offer if you'd rather spend your time walking, reading and listening to the birds.
Details A two-night stay for two costs from £490 (settlenorfolk.co.uk)

The Black Shed Dunvegan, Isle of Skye

The views from this cabin are truly spectacular, perched on the side of Macleod's Tables looking down across Loch Dunvegan, with only curious Hebridean sheep for company. The space has been decked out entirely by local craftspeople and materials, with beautiful ceramics, woodwork and art providing a chic backdrop to the cabin's comfortable bedroom with a wrought-iron kingsize bed and cosy lounge, complete with wood-burner and snug sofas for curling up with a book. The kitchen is fully kitted out with a Smeg electric cooker, a fridge, freezer and all the other essentials. On arrival guests are greeted with a welcome basket of goodies from the Dunvegan deli and restaurant, which is also a great place to go for a special dinner (tasting menus are £85 per person), or to pick up locally sourced charcuterie, cheeseboards, sweet treats and supplies to cook over the cabin's barbecue.
Details A week's stay for two costs from £1,000 (blackshed.co.uk)

Holly Water Cabin, Devon

Huts at the Tawny Hotel near Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

There are a range of huts, cabins and cottages dotted throughout these beautiful grounds to choose from, each with their own charm. The Wildwood Huts are Scandi-chic huts tucked away in the trees, a short stroll from a tranquil lake and on the edge of the hotel's gardens. The spacious treehouses feature beautiful woodland views, with indoor and outdoor freestanding baths and super-kingsize beds, while the newest addition, the Owlets, which opened in spring this year, are five cottage escapes with a shared heated swimming pool and secluded terraces with barbecues. All have access to the hotel's spa and restaurant, serving dishes such as wild sea bass with Jerusalem artichoke (£34), followed by chocolate crémeux with hazelnut, cocoa nibs (£14).
Details A one-night stay for two costs from £270 (thetawny.co.uk)

Unyoked Dalby Forest, North Yorkshire

This company now has cabins in a number of locations including the South Downs, Brecon Beacons and the Cotswolds — but its newest opened as recently as June, based in one of the country's most ancient and peaceful woodlands, Dalby Forest. The five chic cabins will each sleep two and come kitted out with a kingsize bed, hot shower, yoga mats, a wood-burning stove, an outdoor fire pit and a full kitchen with basic kitchen supplies (salt, pepper, olive oil, tea and fresh coffee). Facilities may be simple, but views from the bedrooms' vast picture windows and from the night sky (the area is a designated Dark Sky Discovery Site) are quite special.
Details A two-night stay for two costs from £358 (unyoked.co/uk)

One Cat Farm near Aberaeron, Ceredigion

There may be a focus on sustainability at the heart of this glampsite — but that doesn't take away from its feel of comfort and luxury. Designed with the aim of reconnecting with nature, the four cabins all sit within a secluded three-acre nature reserve, decorated inside in neutral shades, with outdoor kitchens, wood-fired baths and idyllic wild swimming ponds a short stroll away. Footpaths lead directly from the cabins through peaceful woodland, down as far as the beautiful beaches of Cardigan (four miles away), while the Cambrian Mountains are also nearby for a plethora of beautiful hikes. There are some excellent pubs in the area which the hosts can direct you towards — but most guests also pre-order delicious cheeses, pies, salads and bread and biscuits from the local deli and bakery Watson and Pratt's to greet them on arrival (watsonandpratts.co.uk). Shiatsu massage treatments and yoga sessions overlooking the ponds can be booked for your stay too.
Details A two-night stay for two costs from £268 (onecatfarm.com)

Burrenmore Nest near Castlerock, Co Londonderry

Floor-to-ceiling windows in these four wooden lodges look out over the surrounding forest, where the sound of birds is the only noise to break the silence. There are beautiful walks from the front door — a 25-minute stroll from here you'll find the golden sands of Downhill Beach, Dunne Waterfall and the famous Mussenden Temple. Waymarked hiking routes the Ulster Way, North Sperrins Way and the Ulster section of the International Appalachian Trail also pass right by the entrance to Burrenmore. Each lodge comes with luxurious touches such as outdoor hot tubs, cinema projectors, a fire pit with a s'mores kit (the stargazing here is fabulous) and a breakfast hamper that includes freshly baked wheaten bread, granola, local eggs, yoghurt, honey and fruit — and there is also a barrel sauna and cold plunge for guests to use in the woods.
Details A one-night stay for two costs from £275 (burrenmore-nest.com)

Kudhva Tintagel, Cornwall

There are a number of different glamping options at Kudhva (a Cornish word meaning "hideout"), all with breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside. However, the Danish Cabin is in a particularly idyllic corner of the 45-acre site, near a 40ft waterfall and surrounded by woods. The cabin sleeps up to six — although it can of course be booked as a roomy retreat for two — and has a deck overlooking a stream and a fire pit for cooking. Breakfast hampers and boxes of local foodie treats can be pre-ordered from the on-site shop, plus there is the option to have dinner cooked by a private chef, as well as joining one of Kudhva's long-table feast pop-ups with guest chefs. The local pub the Port William is a mile away, overlooking the sands of beautiful Trebarwith Strand from where you can pick up the South West Coast Path, ending the day with a dip back at Kudhva's own reservoir, surrounded by wildflower meadows.
Details A one-night stay for up to six costs from £320 (kudhva.com)

Ice cream is not as bad for you

Sales have almost doubled this year, and some experts say that it could actually be good for us. Peta Bee reports

Deliciously creamy and sweet, ice cream is one of the best things about summer. Sales have nearly doubled during record temperatures this year despite some ice-cream vans charging £7 for a 99 with a flake. As we bask in a seemingly endless heatwave, is it possible we could be getting a health boost from our favourite frozen dessert?

Many commercial ice creams contain emulsifiers, stabilisers, artificial flavours and thickening gums. They are classified as ultraprocessed foods (UPFs) and are best limited — or avoided — in your diet. But homemade, small-batch or traditional brands that use a short list of kitchen cupboard ingredients including milk, cream, sugar, eggs and natural flavourings such as vanilla extract, coffee or fruit are not UPFs, and experts say they can be enjoyed in moderation.

"Ice cream isn't a health food, but it doesn't have to be an unhealthy food either," says Dr Linia Patel, a researcher in the department of clinical sciences and community health at the Universita degli Studi di Milano in Italy and a spokeswoman for the British Dietetic Association. "A scoop or two of good-quality dairy ice cream can absolutely fit into a balanced diet, and is a source of calcium, protein and vitamins like vitamin B12."

Is there more to ice cream's benefits? In his recent book *Eat Your Ice Cream: Six Simple Rules for a Long and Healthy Life*, the American oncologist Dr Ezekiel J Emanuel, a senior professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a world leader in health policy and bioethics, pointed to scientific research showing that occasionally enjoying good-quality ice cream may help to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.

The so-called ice-cream effect was first observed by Harvard scientists two decades ago when they analysed the diets of more than 40,000 men and found that those who ate two or more portions of ice cream a week had a 22 per cent lower risk of the condition. In 2019 a paper in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition reported that people with diabetes who ate up to half a cup (65-75g) a day seemed to be at a lower risk for heart problems.

Before we get too excited, these studies were observational, meaning they don't prove that ice cream itself lowers risk of heart disease or diabetes, only that there is a positive association for some people. "There are all sorts of other explanations as to why modest amounts of ice cream appeared beneficial," says Alex Ruani, a nutrition researcher at University College London and the chief science educator at the Health Sciences Academy. "Those who enjoy an occasional ice cream may differ in many other ways — from their overall diet and lifestyle to their weight, income or health."

Yet some scientists are adamant that there are benefits to a modest ice-cream habit. There's evidence that calcium-rich foods — not specifically ice cream, but it counts — are associated with a decreased risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Dr Dariush Mozaffarian, a leading American cardiologist and director of the Food is Medicine Institute at Tufts University, is among those who suggest that ice cream's purported health benefits may lie in its glycaemic index (GI), which is the speed at which a food raises blood sugar level. The high fat content of traditional dairy ice cream made from minimal ingredients slows down gastric emptying, delaying how quickly its sugars enter the bloodstream. With an average moderate GI of about 60 vanilla ice cream is lower GI than jacket or sweet potatoes and some types of wholegrain bread.

"I recommend to my patients: get a cup of vanilla ice cream for dessert, and put slivered almonds or sliced strawberries on top," Mozaffarian told The Washington Post this year. "Ice cream is healthier than bread. It has a lower glycaemic index. And it has protein and healthy fats."

Patel says that as a general guide "those who are metabolically healthy can occasionally enjoy ice cream without increasing their type 2 diabetes risk, whereas those already developing metabolic disease should often reduce their ice-cream consumption".

Opting for frozen yoghurt is not necessarily a positive step. "It may contain less fat than traditional ice cream because it's often made with milk rather than cream, but some products contain more added sugar to balance the sharper flavour," says Rhiannon Lambert, a nutritionist and the author of *The Unprocessed Plate*.

Don't assume it offers the same probiotic benefits as live natural yoghurt either. "Freezing, storage and manufacturing conditions which often involve heat treatment make it difficult for bacteria to survive, and only frozen yoghurts specifically stating that they contain live cultures should be assumed to do so," Ruani says. "Even then, total beneficial bacteria counts may be lower than in refrigerated yoghurt."

Similarly, says the nutritionist Eli Brecher, "it's tempting to assume the fruit sorbet or the priciest tub is automatically the healthiest choice but it's often not quite that simple. Sorbet might look virtuous next to a rich, full-fat vanilla, but many are little more than sugar and water, while some so-called diet ice creams are made using lots of sweeteners and stabilisers."

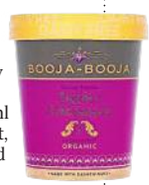
For a truly healthier option, try making ice cream at home. "Whatever goes into a healthy smoothie can be turned into a delicious gelato, especially if you have a gelato machine," Ruani says. "I am lactose intolerant, so I use oat milk or coconut milk, plant-based cream to make the consistency thicker and a selection of frozen mixed berries with banana or a couple of spoons of chocolate spread for sweetness."

Most experts agree on one thing: ice cream is good for the soul. "Some foods, including ice cream, just provide us with joy," Patel says. "That in itself is a key aspect of wellness, and for that reason alone it is something we can include without guilt in an otherwise balanced diet."

Supermarket tubs — the nutritionist's verdict

Healthy options

Booja-Booja Deeply Chocolate 5/5



Dairy-free and cashew-based, this ice cream delivers a properly chocolatey hit without the dairy or unwanted additives. Per 100ml it contains 166kcal and 7.1g fat, of which 2.3g is saturated, and 19g sugars, which means that cholesterol-raising saturated fat stays relatively low.

M&S Only 5 Ingredients Heather Honey 5/5

Exactly what it says on the tub: milk, cream, honey, milk powder and egg, with no refined sugar and nothing else added. It is a cream-based recipe, so contains 10.5g saturated fat per 100g, but in terms of processing this is about as close to a homemade recipe as a supermarket tub gets.

Häagen-Dazs Vanilla 4.5/5

Only five ingredients: cream, milk, sugar, egg and vanilla, nothing artificial added. This is a rich, creamy recipe, so saturated fat sits towards the higher end for an ice cream (10.4g per 100g), but as an ingredients list it has nothing to hide.

> "Ice cream can be healthier than bread, it has a lower GI, plus protein and healthy fats

Duchy Organic Vanilla 4.5/5

Just cream, milk, sugar and a dash of Madagascan vanilla — no stabilisers or gums in sight. Cream makes up more than a quarter of the tub, so this is not a low-fat choice, but every gram of fat here is coming from real dairy rather than being propped up by processing aids. Saturated fat is on the higher side (8.1g per 100g), but this is to be expected from a dairy ice cream with real ingredients.

Remeo Pistacchio Siciliano 4.5/5

Sicilian pistachio paste, egg yolk, milk and cream, with a single stabiliser (locust bean gum) rather than the usual two or three, although glucose syrup does appear on the ingredients list. Per 100g it

as you think

CLAUDIA TOTIR; GETTY IMAGES

Not so healthy

Hackney Gelato Alphonso Mango sorbetto 3.5/5

High in real mango (38 per cent) and dairy-free. Per 100g it contains 115kcal, 0.3g fat (and 0.1g saturated) and 23g sugars, so while saturated fat is close to negligible, the sugar content is higher than several of the "avoid" picks on this list, coming from three separate sources: sugar, dextrose and glucose. Dairy-free and low fat don't automatically mean low-sugar — enjoy in moderation.

Jude's Salted Caramel 2.5/5

Made with condensed milk, glucose-fructose syrup, an emulsifier and two stabilisers. Per 100ml it contains 141kcal, 7.9g fat, of which 4.9g is saturated, and 15g sugars — a moderate saturated fat load carried by a longer processing-aid list than any of the picks above.

Ben & Jerry's Phish Food 2/5

A serving of 100g gives you 273kcal, 8.9g saturated fat and 27g sugars per 100g — the highest sugar count on this list. Chocolate ice cream, marshmallow swirls and caramel sauce mean multiple added sugars and three separate stabilisers before you even reach the chocolate fish.

Halo Top Peanut Butter Cup 2/5

Marketed as the "better for you" option, and on paper it does look lighter, at 131kcal per 100g with lower sugar and saturated fat than most tubs here. But that is achieved through two sweeteners (erythritol and steviol glycosides), an emulsifier, colouring and two stabilisers rather than a simpler recipe. Low calorie does not always mean low processing or wholesome ingredients.

Waitrose No 1 Belgian White Chocolate 1.5/5

Per 100g this contains 294kcal, 19g fat, of which 12.1g is saturated, and 26.6g sugars. One of the highest saturated fat figures on this list — roughly five times that of the Booja-Booja tubs. White chocolate brings sugar and cocoa butter with none of the beneficial flavonoids of dark chocolate, plus an emulsifier for good measure.

By Eli Brecher, registered nutritionist and host of *The Gut 360 Podcast*

contains 132kcal, 5.6g fat, of which 2.3g is saturated, and 13g sugars. It's lower in saturated fat than most of the other tubs here — a benefit of gelato's less cream, more milk method.

Booja-Booja Chocolate Salted Caramel 4/5

This vegan option relies on cashews, cane sugar and cocoa doing the work instead of a long list of emulsifiers. Per 100ml it contains 169kcal, 6.2g fat, of which only 1.3g is saturated, and 21g sugars. The saturated fat figure is particularly low for a chocolate caramel ice cream since cashew fat is largely unsaturated, although the sugar is high.

Yeo Valley Organic Blueberry & Lemon Curd 4/5

Made primarily using sugar, egg, milk and cream, with real fruit doing the flavouring rather than concentrates, and no gums or stabilisers. Saturated fat sits at 7.7g per 100g, which is lower than many other cream-based ice creams, and the sugar count is moderate, at 23.1g per 100g.

The best Italian whites (not just pinot grigio) Jane MacQuitty

Think you know Italian whites? Think again. Humdrum pinot grigio and prosecco may be everywhere, but there are numerous new, rare, characterful indigenous white grapes creeping onto our shelves.

Take your pick from the ancient and distinguished timorasso grape that has resurfaced in Piedmont after decades in the doldrums when it was reduced to not much more than an acre in the late Eighties. Or way down south in Puglia, where the little-known verdeca grape thrives, just as it does in the volcanic soils around Mount Vesuvius. Further south, Sicilian whites retain the bright, herby, lemony acidity of popular drops but with a terroir-led saline spin and texture charge all of their own. No other country can match Italy's excitingly diverse styles at a range of tempting prices.

Italy's underplayed native grapes have an ability to withstand climate change. Unlike the ubiquitous chardonnay that often gets picked in August in Italy (this year more like July), indigenous grapes, planted in higher, cooler zones inland or in cooler sea-breezy spots, will ripen slowly well into the autumn. The success of refrigeration and stainless steel-fermented entry-level charmers — of which soave and Sicily's contemporary whites are a good example — has in turn raised standards and encouraged lower yields and better prices for finer whites.

> "No other country can match Italy's excitingly diverse styles

If I had to pick just one stonkingly good value new-era Italian white it would be Cantina di Monteforte's alpine breeze-cooled, herby, lemon twist, just 11 per cent 2025 Garganega-Pinot Grigio (Marks & Spencer, £6.50). Or plump for Puglia's rare verdeca grape and the 2025 Produttori di Manduria Sarda Verdeca, fermented cool in stainless steel to capture all of its lively citrus and herbaceous saline fruit (Waitrose, £15).

Snap up La Colombera's Piemontese 2024 Timorasso Derthona, made from timorasso, and full of greeny-gold, intense, white almond and seashell oomph (thewinesociety.com, £19.50). In Sicily, the Mandrarossa range includes a gorgeous, single vineyard grillo, aged in large French oak for a year — the 2024 Bertolino Soprano Grillo (thewinereserve.co.uk, £33.99); a salt-licked, racy, orange blossom triumph.

2025 Roberto Sarotto, Campodellolio Gavi di Gavi
13 per cent, Majestic, £18
A delicious, zesty, juicy, stone-fruited cortese grape star from the Sarotto family vineyard.

2024 Pieropan Soave Classico Calvarino
12.5 per cent, nywines.co.uk, £29.75
Pieropan's inaugural screw-capped Calvarino has masses of delicious yellow plum fruit.

2025 Alovini Greco Basilicata Le Ralle
13 per cent, thewine society.com, £11.50
A hand-harvested, stainless steel and acacia barrique-aged greco grape, packed with apple.

2025 Found Ansonica, Sicily
11 per cent, Marks & Spencer, £7.50
Sicily's Cantine Settesoli has made an unusually sprightly, citrussy white with a fine, firm finish.

This week's supermarket best buys

2022 No 1 Valpolicella Ripasso Classico Superiore
Veneto, Italy, 14.5 per cent, Waitrose, £13, down from £16
A useful barbecue red, with lively, leafy, mocha oomph.

2025 Irresistible Explorers Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc
New Zealand, 12 per cent, Co-op, £8.25, down from £10
Made by the Grove Mill estate and bursting with flowering currant pizzazz.

Anciano Rioja
Spain, 13 per cent, Morrisons, £5.95
An excellent, earthy, vegan-friendly, non-vintage red rioja with bold and savoury, sandalwood spice at a knockdown price.

2024 Found Kratosija
Macedonia, 13 per cent, Marks & Spencer, £9
This is a hearty yet juicy Macedonian red that's made from the kratosija grape and overflowing with floral, black fruit.

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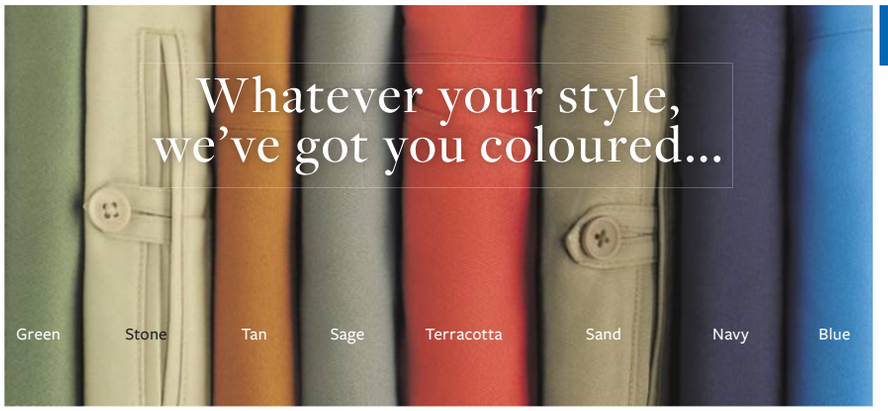

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Outside

12 lessons I learnt in my first year as a gardener

After years of window boxes, Sidonie Wilson finally has her own plot. She shares what she got right (and wrong)

Sidonie Wilson in her garden

I used to think gardening was just buying plants at random, pushing them into the ground and hoping for the best. Then, last year, after a decade of rented spaces, I bought a house, and with it got my first real garden: a small south London plot.

I dug out the lifeless borders left by the previous owner and plotted and planted up my new vision. (Rest assured, the evicted plants and trees were happily relocated to my parents' more spacious plots down the road.) Twelve months, a strict budget and plenty of muscle later, my borders are starting to look like the picture in my head.

The hardest thing about creating a garden on a (small) budget isn't the heavy digging, it's the agonising test of patience. Turns out the quiet thrill of saying "I actually grew that" is worth it. It has been a steep learning curve — I still consider myself a novice — but seeing the garden start to really flourish has been a joy. Here's what I got right — and wrong — over the past 12 months.

Stick to a colour palette

One of the best design choices I made was establishing a strict colour scheme right at the start. It brings the garden together and stops rogue expensive plant purchases. Think back to school art lessons: colour wheel rules apply to plants. Green is my neutral (great foliage and ornamental grasses), creating the perfect background for rich purples (Balkan clary 'Caradonna'), buttery yellows (fennel and yarrow 'Credo') and pops of white flowers (anemone 'Whirlwind', foxglove 'Dalmatian' and wood sage).

But don't be afraid to experiment

It's good to have an area where you can try other colours. I built a raised bed from railway sleepers at the back of the garden, behind the greenhouse. This is where I grow flowers for cutting, including pink dahlias, pastel sweet peas and tangerine cosmos. I've also grown the striking love-lies-bleeding from seed.

Resist the urge to do everything at once

Unless you have Chelsea Flower Show-

Evan Gershkovich: The journalist who became the news

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Page 19

'We followed a maze of lanes between hedgerows of blackberry, honeysuckle, hawthorn and hazel'

Jen and Sim Benson's good walk

What's in Sidonie's garden

Sage 'Amistad'

Siberian bugloss

Dahlia 'Mondriaan'

Love-lies-bleeding

level funding, achieving an instant, professionally designed look is impossible. Trying to stick to a budget, I bought 9cm starter pots in early spring rather than the pricier options at the garden centre now. Planting small and giving roots the space to spread naturally reveals where the true gaps lie.

Planting up my border in autumn and topping up in spring and summer has kept costs manageable and allows my garden to fill out naturally. The same goes for designing different areas — I'm slowly paving sections of the garden. It's a slow process, but something that is much more rewarding to do yourself.

Not all your plants will survive

The most frequent question I am asked now that the world (OK, my Instagram followers) knows I have green fingers is: "Why is my plant dead?"

Keeping things alive, especially with the long, hot, dry summer we've been having, is not an easy task. I came home recently to find that my hydrangeas were burnt to a cinder — not from lack of water but more likely because of root competition or too much sun exposure.

> I came home recently to find that my hydrangeas were burnt to a cinder

Growing things from seed, bulbs and young plugs is where you can have the most fun, and for me it has been a good way to learn about what soil/light/maintenance certain plants need. If one doesn't make it it's all part of the fun.

Snip and chop regularly

Annuals are easy to grow but they do need regular deadheading, living up to their "cut and come again" nature. It's not just annuals — some perennials will benefit from a mid-summer cut-back. In my garden it's the Balkan clary, lady's mantle and catmint that require attention. This prompts the plant to create more. You should get a second flourish of flowers in late summer.

Don't underestimate the power of a pot

I like to think of mine as dynamic garden features. No matter the size of your garden or pot, change them up seasonally and move them to areas in need of a colour boost. Outside my kitchen window a large container holds agapanthus, underplanted with creeping thyme to cover the bare soil and add texture.

In autumn pack pots with spring bulbs; once they're spent, swap them out for summer annuals. This would work for a tiny patio, balcony or any size of patch.

Height adds instant drama

A flat, one-dimensional garden lacks energy. It can be easy to end up with plants all of the same height, especially in the first year of planting. Design logic dictates placing tall plants at the back of borders and short at the front, but I've found that breaking the rules adds depth.

I've created a middle layer that acts as a "green screen" in my central border using multi-stem trees, and alternated tall, airy perennials throughout. At the front, my catmint 'Walkers Low', lady's mantle and necklace vine are really coming into their own, looking gorgeous as they spill out of the front of borders and across the path.

Ornamental grasses live up to the hype

Designers rave about ornamental grasses, and for good reason: they provide movement, soft texture and winter architectural interest that more rigid shrubs can't provide. They are low maintenance, drought-tolerant and mostly pest-proof.

I've planted Japanese forest grass all around the base of my amelanchier to create a lush green carpet. I love autumn moor-grass and eulalia 'Morning Light' swaying throughout my borders, breaking up the perennials and catching the afternoon sun.

Easy-to-grow annuals are your friends

Gappy borders? If you have guests coming over for alfresco dining, don't rush to the garden centre to buy expensive mature plants to provide much needed colour.

Try growing annuals such as cosmos, zinnias, marigolds and nasturtiums from seed. Once hardened off in late spring these can be planted out into gaps in your borders and empty pots for a pop of summer colour. Dahlias such as 'Mondriaan' and 'French cancan' are great colour gap-fillers too. It gives maximum impact for minimal spend.

> I use rusted steel stakes for my dahlias, which look stylish even before the plant covers them

Choose stylish stakes

I didn't do this in my first year of planting, and when it rained I ended up with floppy hydrangeas and snapped dahlias. The same goes for top-heavy perennials. The hardest is remembering to stake them early, before they properly start to put on growth. Make a feature of the supports. I use rusted steel stakes and obelisks from Crocus for my dahlias, which look stylish even before the plant covers them.

Evergreens are non-negotiable

I asked the garden designer Lucy Wilcox what she thinks is the single biggest mistake novice gardeners make. Her answer? Missing evergreen structure. It's easy to miss them off your plant list because, frankly, they look a bit dull next to blooming perennials. But relying solely on the latter leaves your garden looking sad and bare come winter. Trust me, I learnt the hard way.

This year I've filled winter gaps with pittosporum hedges, clipped into domes. This will give me colour and structure year-round. Semi-evergreens are key too — my shady hero plants have been bugloss 'Jack Frost' and glossy wood spurge.

Furniture is worth investing in

After years of renting, I've owned every iteration of bargain garden furniture. Wooden sets have warped and cheap knockoffs have ended up on Facebook Marketplace after a winter season.

We finally invested in the metal Hay Palissade set, a staple in every garden designer's little black book. It's a recent investment, but so far it's proving to be weatherproof, and I'm confident it won't need replacing after only a few seasons.

Joe Swift is away

Beware the exploding sweet peas!

Harvesting is risky at Easton, says Ann Treneman

I have harvested many things but never a sweet pea. That is about to change, however, because I am standing in Easton Walled Gardens in Lincolnshire surrounded by 44 towers of sweet peas that are literally going to seed. Each tower still has flowers and pods, mostly green but some brown.

"This one is just about to go," says Ursula Cholmeley, also known as Lady Cholmeley, who created the garden and is a sweet pea expert. She is holding out a brown one. The pod is tough. "It feels like a very rough Chinese fortune cookie," I reply.

Ursula holds out another pod, two twists of brown husk. "This one has already exploded and the seed has gone. You want to catch them before this."

On a warm day (this summer that is most days) you may be able to hear, as you walk through the sweet pea towers, the "pop pop pop" of seed pods exploding. The idea, of course, is to harvest them beforehand and place the pods in paper bags or cardboard boxes for contained explosions. The resulting ripe seeds will be dark brown (green ones are not ready) which are then put in Tupperware containers in the fridge, ready for planting either in the autumn or spring.

Sweet pea harvesting is a major operation at Easton and normally starts in late August. This year, because of the heat, it is three weeks early. On any one tower or even plant, there are flowers as well as both green and brown seed pods. Down in Kent I have only pods now, mostly brown and some twisted ones that have exploded. Still, there will be enough for me to harvest and sow for next year.

NICOLA STOCKEN/GAP PHOTOS; VIKKI RIMMER

Easton Walled Gardens, Lincolnshire

The Easton estate has been in the Cholmeley family since 1592, but when Ursula and her husband, Sir Fred Cholmeley, moved there the gardens were in freefall. She led their revival, beginning in 2001, with sweet peas featured from the start. She only realised later from old photographs of Easton that they had been grown there for at least 100 years. At one point she had 100 cultivars. That was later pared down to 40, the "best of the best", with seeds sold in the shop and online.

This country's love affair with sweet peas began in 1699 when the original *Lathyrus odoratus* was sent to England from its native Sicily by the monk Francisco Cupani. It is the grandparent of all that followed, including the grandifloras, which have larger flowers. After these came the Moderns which, confusingly, are grander than the grandifloras with larger and in some cases, very frilly flowers.

Sweet peas have a reputation — deserved, in Ursula's opinion — for being hard to grow. "A lot of people mistake them as being tender. They don't think of them as hardy annuals, which is exactly what they are," says Tim Metcalfe Kemp, Easton's head gardener. "They grow them in quite warm conditions when they're young, and they end up with these incredibly long plants, these tall plants that they then plant out in spring. And they don't do very well at all."

There is no such mollycoddling at Easton. The autumn sowing here starts in mid-November and as soon as they germinate in the greenhouse, the root-trainer pots are moved outside to overwinter (they are hardy down to minus 5C) in mouseproof frames. They are then planted out in March. "It's called growing them hard," Ursula says. "The idea is you're trying to get big roots, not lots of top growth, because a good sweet pea is all about how the roots do."

Sweet pea pods

> "As you walk through the sweet pea towers, you can hear the 'pop pop pop' of seed pods

At Easton they sow in the autumn (planted out in March) and also in the spring (planted out in April). Sweet peas, which shoot up more than two metres, will thank you for enriching the soil with compost and after the first flowers appear, giving them regular feeds.

One of the wonderful things about sweet peas is that they are forgiving. "If you've totally messed up," Ursula says, "and your sweet peas look really straggly, just liquid feed them. It will give them — and you — a chance."

Lady Cholmeley's favourite sweet peas

- **'Mollie Rilstone'** Light green and cream buds, then pink and cream flowers.
- **'Our Harry'** Clear blue, highly fragrant. "A really good doer."
- **'Border Beauty'** One of Ursula's top tips is that in a mixed bouquet, adding a white sweet pea will make all the others "pop". This is white with a small blue rim.
- **'Indigo King'** Close to the wild one but with longer stems and larger flowers.
- **'Lord Nelson'** Deep navy colour.
- **'Toffee Apple'** Deep red. Reliable garden performer with masses of flowers.
- **'America'** Red and white striped. Good for pots.
- **'Albutt Blue'** Outstanding scent and flower, with a blue rim on a white background.

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JEN AND SIM BENSON; ALAMY

A good walk Garn Goch from Llangadog, Carmarthenshire

How hard is it?

7½ miles; moderate; hilly, rocky section

Garn Goch is an ancient monument of vast proportions. One of the largest in Wales, the settlement encloses more than 11 hectares of heather-clad hillside above the River Tywi on the far western edge of Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park.

We'd made our way up narrowing, steepening lanes from nearby Llangadog to the summit of Y Gaer Fawr, the larger of Garn Goch's twin forts. From the western promontory we looked out over the glacier-carved Tywi valley and the tree-fringed hills of Carmarthenshire to the distant grey-blue billows of the Cambrian Mountains. Behind us rose the bluff of the Black Mountain — Y Mynydd Du — baked into pale gold by a rainless summer.

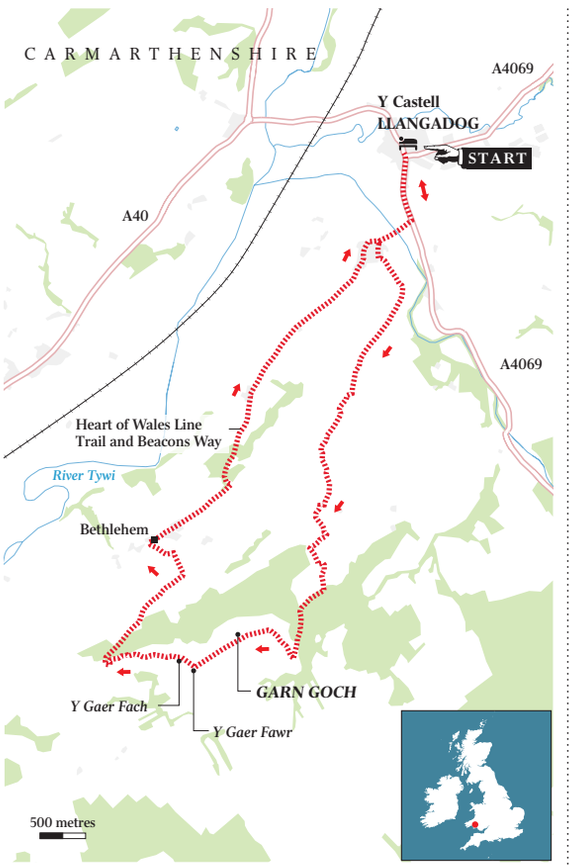
A rubble of rough, grey sandstone marked the outline of the fort, its ramparts measuring more than a mile around. Within the enclosure are remnants of human activity spanning millennia: a vast neolithic long cairn, prehistoric postern gates and passages, a medieval farmstead. Most of the visible structures are late Bronze Age or Iron Age, but these were built on an existing site of ceremonial importance that may have held similar status to Stonehenge and Avebury.

Unlike its popular relatives, Garn Goch is a remote spot. Our explorations were accompanied only by the lonely calls of red kites, the hum of bumblebees foraging the vibrant blooms of the heather, the whisper of a gentle but welcome breeze. Nestled between scrub and rock grew clumps of bilberry (wimberry or "llys" in Wales) and tiny yellow stars of tormentil. The plants have been used in traditional medicine for centuries, but only this year was tormentil's ability to inhibit the growth of multidrug-resistant pathogens acknowledged by modern science.

From the summit we descended on the Beacons Way, which traverses the national park from Abergavenny nearly 100 miles to the east. This section of the route is part of the Heart of Wales Line Trail linking the stations between Swansea and Shrewsbury via the valleys and uplands of Carmarthenshire, Powys and Shropshire.

Close to the road we spotted a monolith inscribed "Gwynfor" in memory of the Welsh politician and Plaid Cymru president Gwynfor Evans. From here we followed a maze of lanes between hedgerows of blackberry, dog rose, honeysuckle, hawthorn and hazel to Bethlehem, a tiny hamlet with an atmospheric non-conformist chapel.

> "Nestled between scrub and rock grew clumps of bilberry and tiny yellow stars of tormentil



Clockwise from main: views from Garn Goch; a red kite; tormentil flowers

Eventually we arrived back in Llangadog, an interesting village with ancient origins, bordered on three sides by the rivers Sawdde, Brân and Tywi. While the Beacons Way finishes here, the Heart of Wales Line Trail continues north towards Llandovery. But our aim was Y Castell, an 18th-century coaching inn set on the main route — an old drovers' road — through the village, with comfy beds and top-notch cooking.

Start/finish Y Castell, Llangadog, SA19 9BW

Getting there Heart of Wales Line train to Llangadog. Road: just off the A40, between Llandeilo and Llandovery

Walk Follow A4069 towards Felindre. Turn right over Afon Sawdde and bear left, following the lane signed Garn Goch. Stay right at first junction, continuing left, right, left to reach Beacons Way (BW) at SN696242. Turn right, following BW over Garn Goch and down to road. Turn right onto road, following BW downhill, left on footpath and right on road through Bethlehem. Turn left onto bridleway signed BW, continuing past Dolau Farm and Bryngwyn Farm to Felindre. Recross river and turn left to return to Llangadog.

Food and accommodation Y Castell, Llangadog (01550 777377, ycastell.wales)

More information Visit Wales (visitwales.com)

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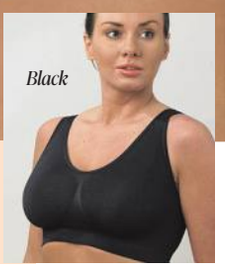

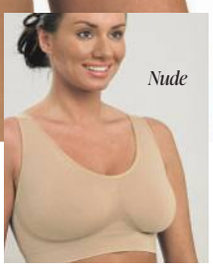

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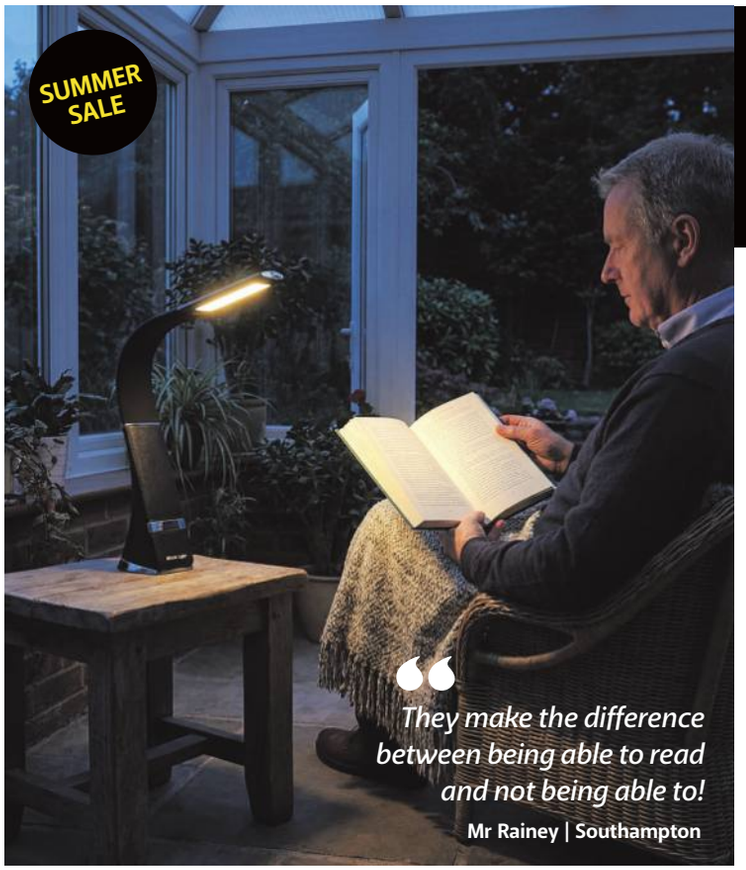

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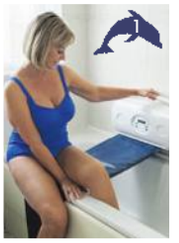

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Travel

Page 34

‘Lake Atitlan sprawled in all directions, two of its volcanoes bathed in dusky pink’

Emily Sargent seeks adventure in Guatemala

Casa Luum, Algarve

The 25 best villas in Portugal

A contemporary stay in Porto, a charming house in Alentejo or a stone cottage in Lisbon. Rhiannon Batten has the pick

Visiting Portugal for the first time, a couple of decades ago, I couldn’t believe I’d never made it to Europe’s wild, western seaboard before. I was staying at Muxima, a guesthouse near Aljezur owned by a couple who had worked in Angola and brought sub-Saharan style plus a boho, surfy vibe to their pine-peppered plot.

Rising from one of its ochre-coloured bedrooms, I ate little cakes made from a special type of sweet potato grown only locally and sipped orange juice freshly squeezed from the tree above me while wavering between a dip in the natural swimming pool or a pedal over to the wind-raked beaches of the nearby Costa Vicentina. “We’re technically in the Algarve but the lifestyle here is more like that in the Alentejo, so we call it the Alengarve,” the owner told me, pouring more coffee. So much for the beers-before-breakfast, high-rise hotels and golf course tropes of Portuguese holidays.

That was my first taste of Portugal. I soon returned, keen to explore the country’s history-cobbled cities, fine wineries, its thrillingly wild landscapes and now-buoyant field-to-fork dining scene. Late summer or autumn became my favourite time to visit. Balmy rather than blistering, the crowds thinned and the sea still warm, this already-affordable country comes into its seductive own. Now with new owners, Muxima is still going strong, though you’ll have to go quickly or wait till spring as it closes for the season each autumn (two nights’ B&B from £316; muxima-aljezur.com).

Moinho da Fadagosa, Centro

These days there are plenty of places that offer its same breezy charm, however, especially if you opt to self-cater.

Here I’ve rounded up 25 villas, cottages and cabins across the country. From remote mountain hideaways with hiking from the door to restored windmills

Great stays next page

▶ for stargazing from bed; characterful, family-friendly retreats with swimming pools and padel courts to azulejo-tiled wonders standing proudly in the country's prettiest towns. Each one offers a sure-fire way to soak up Portugal's wild and glorious culture.

Javalina
Penha Longa, Norte

A sleeping beauty once shrouded in greenery, this hideaway was recently rescued and stylishly restored by a young Swiss-Portuguese couple. It's a favourite among honeymooners. Inside, vintage finds are paired with sharp modern details such as caramel-coloured tiles and local pottery, while outside there's a yabba dabba doo stone bath and a tear-shaped saltwater pool, both with wide-angle views of the Douro Valley. Although it's let as a holiday cottage, a breakfast basket is delivered every morning with jars of fruit, granola and yoghurt tucked in among pastries and juices.
Details Two nights' B&B for two from £309 (javalina.pt). Fly to Porto

Casa Luum
Almancil, Algarve

Spend your days stepping in and out of the shadows at this minimalist white villa, where sharp angles, unexpected corners and pools of water have been designed to reflect the stone walls, water tanks and patios of the regional vernacular. Four bedrooms and two bathrooms spill across the ground floor, alongside a kitchen and dining area, while a large, light living room and sun terrace stretch across the upper floor. Large glass windows frame slivers of sky, stone and tree; follow them out and you'll find Praia da Falesia beach or kayak trips at Ria Formosa nature reserve within 30 minutes' drive. A twin property next door can be rented in conjunction if you're travelling as a larger group.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £2,019 (oliverstravels.com). Fly to Faro

Fabrica No Jardim
Porto, Norte

Dedicated city-trippers can live like the hippest local at this corrugated three-storey house tucked behind another building off buzzy Rua do Almada in Porto. Inspired by the factory that once stood on the site, the house won an architectural prize in 2019 for its sanctuary-like conjuring of concrete, terrazzo stone and wood, and inside it's peppered with retro design pieces as well as work by local artists and makers. Two terraces overlook the garden that unfurls behind it and it's within walking distance of Sao Bento railway station, the Dom Luis I bridge and Gaia's port cellars.
Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £398 (fabrica-no-jardim.eu). Fly to Porto

Casas do Monte
Montemor-o-Novo, Alentejo

A forward-looking resort named after the stream that runs through it, Gandum Village is within 35 acres of regenerative farmland and forest an hour's drive from Lisbon and 30 minutes from Evora. Powered by solar and built in taipa, an ancient rammed-earth technique that helps to regulate humidity and temperature naturally, it has a trio of apartments, Casas do Monte, tailor-made for families as well as 18 hotel rooms, a farm-to-fork restaurant, an outdoor cinema, a children's playground, a bike rental facility and three pools. Colourful cushions, artwork and tiling brighten up the apartments' practical interiors, and while they don't have hobs or ovens, there's just enough kitchenette kit to make picnic-style suppers (breakfast is included).
Details One night's B&B for four from £118 (gandum.pt). Fly to Lisbon

Maybe October
Aljezur, Algarve

Among the big skies and sweet-smelling shrubs of the protected Costa Vicentina natural park, this two-bedroom rental was built on the site of a former farmhouse by a family of German surfers. The coast is ten minutes' drive away if you want to follow their lead, but it's tempting to stay put and decompress. Designed in the peach and terracotta tones that ripple through the surrounding olive and cork-speckled hills, the villa's cocoon-like interiors are sparse but cosy, with underfloor heating for the cooler months. Yoga mats, meditation cushions and organic teas are provided, and sleep is encouraged with a pillow menu and calming essential oils.
Details Five nights' self-catering for four from £940 (maybeoctober.com). Fly to Faro

Monte de Santiago
Sao Domingos, Alentejo

Pick up supplies before you arrive at this secluded two-bedroom farmhouse, then cast yourself adrift in its 16 hectares of cork-speckled golden grasslands. The village of Sao Domingos, a couple of miles away, has shops, bars, restaurants and cafés, and there are beaches and sightseeing (including Santiago do Cacem's spectacular castle) within half an hour's drive. Resist the itch to fill your days, though, and you can swim gentle laps of the villa's ruler-shaped pool or cook garlicky bowls of pork and clams to eat on the terrace under the stars.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from £840 (urlaubsarchitektur.de). Fly to Porto

Casa Pemba Vila Franca da Serra, Centro

From its whitewashed exterior there's little sign of the bubblegum colours that brighten the interior of this joyful two-bedroom cottage. One of three holiday homes on the Quinta da Estrela estate, Casa Pemba (like the others) has access to a shared library, honesty bar and, until it closes for the season in mid-October, an outdoor pool. Reached by a winding gravel road, it's built beside the atmospheric ruined stones of an old shepherd's cottage, and from the shaded terrace there are soul-lifting views of the rugged Serra da Estrela nature park (natural.pt).
Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £163 (quintadaestrela.com). Fly to Porto

Javalina, Douro Valley

Quinta do Pinheiro, Algarve

Casa Em Afife
Viana do Castelo, Norte

Just 20 minutes' walk from a long, white sand beach, and five from Afife railway station, Casa Em Afife sits across a lane from an old stone chapel of almost identical proportions, the more ancient architectural flipside to this blocky white sugar cube of a building. A pale, open-plan interior floats around an open-tread staircase leading to a roof terrace. For chillier weather there's a huge bathtub as well as a walk-in shower, but the outdoor pool is the real eye-catcher — a circular puddle of blue encased in a shallow white square.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £2,185 (welcomebeyond.com). Fly to Porto

Casas do Monte, Alentejo

Olhao Townhouse, Algarve

ISABELLE VERMEERSCH; RICARDO JUNQUEIRA; DAN BIRCH

La Salvada, Alentejo

Aldeia da Mata Pequena
Mafra, Lisbon

A Portuguese twist on the cottagecore aesthetic, this huddle of 14 stone cottages bustles with pretty fabric sink skirts, vintage finds and comfortingly traditional pops of white, blue and ochre. Nine miles north of historic Sintra, and 20 minutes' drive from the sand and surf at Ericeira, each one sleeps between two and eight and has been deftly restored to offer just the right balance of cosiness and comfort. Although the cottages have kitchens, breakfast is included (freshly baked loaves are delivered every morning) and there's a small restaurant if you don't feel like cooking after a hike through the surrounding hills.
Details Two nights' B&B from £140 (aldeiadamatapequena.com). Fly to Lisbon

Cerdeira Lousa, Centro

Abandoned in the 1970s before being restored over the past 20 years, the schist village of Cerdeira perches on the slopes of the Lousa mountain range, surrounded by oak forests, waterfalls and, each autumn, the spectacle of rutting deer (don't forget your binoculars). Its ten cottages now serve as restful holiday rentals. Although many visitors come to hike, bike, read or rest, Cerdeira is an enclave of creativity, home to a gallery space, creative retreats and, for self-catering guests, the possibility to book ceramics workshops. Guided walks are also possible (from £47 for 2.5 hours).
Details One night's self-catering for two from £130 (cerdeirahomefor creativity.com). Fly to Porto

Mosteiro Encantado
Evora, Alentejo

A historic peach 20 minutes' drive from the world heritage museum-city of Evora, this former Jesuit monastery turned elegant country estate is co-owned by the architect Tomas Ramos, and it shows. Its baroque chapel and 18th-century azulejos tiles have been conscientiously preserved, but are now juxtaposed with large steel installations by the contemporary artist Annabelle Moreau. Eight luxuriously understated bedrooms are swathed in shades of stone and terracotta, plus there's a sparkling kitchen, a padel court in the grounds and a sleek outdoor pool.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for 16 from £12,447 (lecollectionist.com). Fly to Lisbon

La Salvada
Melides, Alentejo

He may be known for his trademark red-soled stilettos but Christan Louboutin's latest creation dispenses with scarlet in favour of rose. In 2023 the shoe designer opened Vermelho, his first hotel, in Melides and, while a second resort is set to open imminently, in the meantime two villas have been launched ten minutes' drive from the hotel. La Salvada is the more flamboyant, a pink-hued, two-bedroom villa with a hint of the ziggurat about it. Stepped walls, double-height ceilings, cactus-filled courtyards and statement furniture are trimmed with terracotta and azulejos tiles, and framed by a plunge pool and trio of rooftop terraces.
Details One night's self-catering for four from £1,884 (vermelhohotel.com/villas). Fly to Lisbon

Quinta do Pinheiro
Luz de Tavira, Algarve

Flocks of flamingos stop to rest in the wetlands of the Ria Formosa Natural Park each autumn as they migrate south from the Camargue in France. Their presence draws birders to this collection of five holiday houses on the park's eastern fringes, as well as those looking to pause. There's a resort vibe in summer, with a seasonal restaurant, that switches to a more retreat-like atmosphere in autumn. There is a yoga pavilion, gardens, massage spaces and two outdoor pools. Lagoon swimming is a ten-minute walk away and a string of beaches to explore (one accessible only by kayak or the quinta's boat).
Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £565 (quintapinheiro.com). Fly to Faro

Moinho da Fadagosa
Macao, Centro

Signs of the mill's machinery can still be seen in the bedroom of this romantically restored windmill a 90-minute or so drive northeast of Lisbon. There's an open fire for chillier evenings downstairs and a bench and table outdoor for dinners with freewheeling views. Walks and river swims are steps away, woodfired pizzas and wine tastings are an option and nearby towns are home to medieval castles, rustic restaurants and thermal spas. With its 360-degree views the windmill is the perfect place from which to spot shooting stars during the autumn meteor showers.
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £168 (moinhodafadagosa.com). Fly to Lisbon

Olhao Townhouse
Olhao, Algarve

A pocket of salt-tinged, sun-baked earthiness that proudly rejects the Botoxed architectural sprawl of the region's holiday resorts, the old fishing town of Olhao is a place to shop at markets, wander bougainvillea-draped streets and hop on ferries to barrier-island beaches. In other words, steep yourself in Algarvian soul. Which is where this late 19th-century former merchant's house comes in. Trimmed with original shutters and pretty tiles, it was restored by the furniture designer Julian Chichester and now features a rooftop kitchen and plunge pool.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for ten from £5,950 (ruralescapes.co.uk). Fly to Faro

Flor de Arroz
Carvalhal, Alentejo

Rice reigns around Comporta, an hour's drive south of Lisbon, where the crop has been cultivated for over a century. It's a different grain that draws holidaymakers, however; just outside the village of Carvalhal a vast stretch of pristine sand unfurls along the coast. Stay at Flor de Arroz and you're just 20 minutes' walk from the beach, overlooking the storks and rice paddies of Lagoa Formosa. A polished take on the area's thatched palafitas, a breezy main house and separate cabin share a pool. Both spaces sleep four, balancing privacy and connection for two families, or generations, holidaying together.
Details Two nights' self-catering for eight from £1,376 (airbnb.co.uk). Fly to Lisbon

Praia do Carvalhal, Alentejo

The Granary House
Arouca, Centro

Slate-roofed with a slatted black timber façade and sliding glass doors, this two-bedroom house was built on the site of a former granary and retains its predecessor's dinky footprint. Inside, the walls are finished in stone-coloured microcement and the furniture is harmoniously minimal, a spiral staircase connecting its two floors. Surrounded by meadow and woodland within the Arouca Geopark, it's a restful base to which to return after tiptoeing along one of the world's longest pedestrian suspension bridges, 516 Arouca (516arouca.pt), climbing

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▶ the zigzagging wooden walkways of the Passadicos do Paiva (passadicosdopaiva.pt) or exploring historic Arouca with its vast monastery.
Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £508 (airbnb.co.uk). Fly to Porto

Casa Griffith
Loule, Algarve

A recent expansion into Portugal means Simpson Travel devotees can add the Algarve to their holiday wishlist. Top of it should be this classic country villa five minutes' drive from the town of Loule, with its pretty old town and Moorish-style covered market. There's no neglected lawn or tacky astroturf here. Instead, the traditional terracotta-roofed villa is skirted by a veranda trailed with bright bougainvillea, a swimming pool fringed with palm trees and a pickleball court shaded by pines. Inside, the master bedroom has a private balcony with long views of the rugged Algarvian hills.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for seven from £1,500 (simpsontravel.com). Fly to Faro

Casa Sol, Vigias
Carreiras, Alentejo

Taking its name from the stone observation posts that spike the surrounding hillsides, Vigias is a collection of eyrie-like holiday rentals in the northern Alentejo. About ten minutes' drive from Portalegre, with its 16th-century cathedral and tapestry museum, the five houses here are woven from wood, clay, lime and concrete, with invigorating views. Like the others, Casa Sol has a small private pool. For cooler stays there's a double-sided fireplace and a Bond lair-style concrete bathtub set below a huge window. Head out on one of the hiking trails that leads through the estate's cork trees, eyes peeled for the eagles, boars and lynxes this brawny corner of the Serra de Sao Mamede Natural Park is known for, or wander the spectacular walled hilltop town of nearby Marvao.
Details Two nights' self-catering for four from £350 (vigias.pt). Fly to Porto

The Blue House
Silves, Algarve

Almost as much a local landmark as the dramatic Moorish castle that rises behind it, this pretty blue-tiled villa was built in the 19th century and renovated in 2021. With modern flats looming over it on one side, would-be holiday hermits need not apply, but large, light bedrooms in shades of duck egg, hotel-style bathrooms, a plunge pool in its courtyard garden and a central Silves location make the villa a practical base for more gregarious guests. You're a few minutes' walk from the castle and 20 minutes' drive from the coast if the beaches are calling; tucked in among cliffs, Praia da Marinha is gorgeous whatever the weather.
Details Five nights' self-catering from £1,678 (airbnb.co.uk). Fly to Faro

Casa Abracar
Tavira, Algarve

Designed in the 1980s by a Luso-Brazilian architect, this low-slung, post-modern villa a 15-minute drive from Tavira slots flawlessly into the wetlands of the Ria Formosa Natural Park. It was renovated in 2021, and its owners' combined passions for interior design and antiques hunting are elegantly illustrated in the house's pairing of hi-tech heating and air-conditioning systems with a collection of mid-century and vintage finds. It's perched by the water's edge, and a sweeping glass frontage gives each room direct access to the landscaped gardens and pool, and the saltwashed ria beyond.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £8,023 (cvvillas.com). Fly to Faro

Casa Griffith, Algarve

Guincho Lodge
Cascais, Lisbon

Need to take work with you? This four-bedroom villa near Cascais and Sintra may have been designed for decompression, with a saltwater pool, a woodfired sauna and decor as richly pale as a scoop of Serradura pudding, but there's a self-contained office too. Even if you can't quite leave work life behind, it's easy to claw out a bit of downtime here. The villa's outdoor bathtub is perfectly placed for enjoying a sunset soak looking out at the ocean, while the biscuit-coloured sands and prime surf of Guincho beach are seven minutes' walk away.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £9,450 (guincholodge.com). Fly to Lisbon

Casa dos Patios
Ponte de Lima, Minho

Designed to offer a refined immersion in local culture, Cerquido by Nhome encourages guests to walk the ancient trails that lead out through the Serra D'Arga mountains, buy paintings by local artists, visit the area's Roman and medieval sites, sip the region's vinho verde and feast on local delicacies such as roast kid goat. Many of its 12 holiday homes and cabins have been ambitiously reimagined from existing structures to blend ancient oak beams and stone walls with earthy pigments, concrete and glass. For ultimate immersion, some — including Casa dos Patios — have private outdoor pools.
Details One night's self-catering for six from £205. Fly to Porto (cerquido.nhome.pt)

Casa Abracar, Algarve

Monte das Casolas
Grandola, Alentejo

An hour's drive from Lisbon, Monte das Casolas sprawls safari-style across a wonderfully untamed slice of Alentejano meadow and cork forest. Though often rented out as a whole for retreats, its five timber cottages and two stone houses are also available as holiday rentals. Designed to reflect traditional local architecture and minimise impact on local habitats, the boxy white cottages are the ones to book. Sleeping between two and six, they share a spectacular circular pool and yoga shala. Each has a shaded wooden deck for outdoor dining or unwinding, and the Comporta coast is 30 minutes' drive away for beach days.
Details Two nights' self-catering for two from £225 (casolas.pt). Fly to Lisbon

Villa Antonia Sao Bras de Alportel, Algarve

Olive groves and whitewashed villages surround Monte da Palmeira, an old hilltop farmhouse in the eastern Algarve. Dark wood antiques, striped linen cushions and pink marble bathrooms shine against the building's gleaming white walls, while the living room's huge open fire adds cosiness during off-season stays. A clever mix of shared spaces and quiet corners makes for harmonious holidays on trips with extended family. Start with breakfast on the villa's marble outdoor table, nap away a day by the pool, or at one of a string of beaches within 30 minutes' drive, then return to watch the sunset from the terrace before doing it all again.
Details Seven nights' self-catering for nine from £4,754 (monteda palmeira.com). Fly to Faro

Luxury Central America

Volcanos, lakes and Maya ruins in Guatemala

A diverse trip takes you from the capital to little towns and up into the highlands. By Emily Sargent

Lake Atitlan and the San Pedro volcano

As I was enjoying breakfast on my hotel's terrace, a waiter appeared silently, raised a pointed finger and whispered: *"Coccodrilo."* I followed his gaze and, sure enough, languishing in the shallows of a lagoon ten metres away was a very large crocodile. Perhaps misconstruing my freeze response for extreme relaxation, the waiter smiled, gave a cheerful thumbs-up and disappeared. After a few minutes spent trying to catch the croc's eye to gauge her intentions, I continued with my huevos. Worst-case scenario, I figured it would be an interesting way to go.

I was staying at Villa Maya, a hotel in the centre of a lush nature preserve in the northern Peten region of Guatemala, from where I would be visiting the ancient Maya ruins of Tikal. Having arrived in the country nine days before, I had grown somewhat acclimatised to its fantastical wildlife; however, moments like this still gave me a childlike thrill.

The trip, a recent addition by the specialist tour operator Journey Latin America, had begun with drama of a different kind. After flying first into Miami, I found all planes had been grounded due to hurricane risk. I'd had only semi-ironic notions of this being something of an *Eat, Pray, Love* adventure after a tough few years; I hadn't necessarily imagined it beginning with a hurricane, I thought, as I bedded down gingerly in a motel that bore the sign "No soliciting".

Thankfully I was able to fly the next day. On arrival in the capital, Guatemala City, I was immediately driven four hours west by my guide for the next few days, Christian Lopez. We were heading for Guatemala's highlands and Lake Atitlan; a vast, beautiful lake surrounded by three volcanoes, Toliman, Atitlan and San Pedro, the last of which is still considered active (though its last serious eruption was in 1853). There is a vastness to Guatemala City and we passed steep hillsides covered in densely stacked houses. Chatting to Lopez, we quickly found common ground with his beloved cat, Pachita. At one point, however, he paused and with a pained look confessed he'd had to give Pachita's mother away on account of her "bad attitude". It transpired that she kept trying to eat his daughter's turtle — which, to be fair, is quite rude. We drove on as the light faded and the landscape shifted, winding our way through darkening mountains.

At Casa Palopo, a Relais & Châteaux hotel set on one of the steep hillsides surrounding Santa Catarina, I was greeted by a luxurious, beautifully decorated room with hand-painted tiles and bright teal walls — but I audibly gasped when I pulled back the curtains the next morning. In front of me, Lake Atitlan's deep blue surface sprawled in all directions; two of its three volcanoes bathed in dusky pink predawn light while a shock of bougainvillea tumbled from the roof above.

The hotel's secluded terrace shares the same view and so moments later I sat watching the sun climb high into the sky, a hummingbird hovering briefly above the table as I ate fresh papaya and pineapple alongside warm, pillow-soft bread.

Guatemala's highlands of Solola are home to over a dozen Maya groups, each with their own culture and language, and we visited several communities during the trip. On the shores of Lake Atitlan a tiny boat ferried us from the docks beside Casa Palopo to slim wooden jetties that spooled into the lake beside Santiago Atitlan, followed by San Juan La Laguna, a riot of murals and painted streets. Both towns produce beautiful traditional fabrics and crafts; in Santiago Atitlan I met a family who have woven intricately patterned clothes for generations. Amazingly the vivid colours all come from plant dyes, I was told, the whole process being bound up in a relationship with nature. Cotton threads that have been soaked in dye develop into myriad unique shades depending on the phase of the moon under which they are left to dry.

Lake Peten Itza, Flores

The next day, in Chichicastenango, a town known for its traditional food market, ceramics and Maya culture, I stood gazing across a hillside covered in a Tetris of small pastel-coloured monuments — graves, I realised — in bright blues, yellows and pinks, according to the loved one's favourite.

We squeezed through bustling streets, plastic crates piled high with ruby red tomatoes, mangos and dried corn, as the smell of fresh tortillas and tamales wafted down from ahead. The blend between Maya and Catholic traditions can be seen clearly here. The Catholic Iglesia de Santo Tomás, for example, sits perched atop the steps of a former Maya temple. Inside, statues of Christ sit beside engravings of Maya gods.

A dazzlingly colourful funeral passed by — an entire community in bright Maya dress accompanying the slow-moving truck as it carried the dead from her home. Adults played mariachi-style music and drummed on either side while a group of children led the way, one swinging incense, others holding aloft photos in golden frames.

Antigua was one of the places I'd been most excited to visit. It's a beautifully preserved colonial town with Unesco world heritage status about 70 miles southeast of Chichicastenango, known for its brightly coloured buildings, courtyard gardens and romantic cobbled streets leading to views of three surrounding volcanoes.

While the town's beauty lived up to expectations — and I sampled some exceptional coffee and chocolate — it felt touristy compared with the highlands and my hotel, Los Pasos, though gorgeous, was unfortunately the site of a (very loud) American wedding. I did manage to snatch a peaceful moment on its terrace surrounded by red-tiled roofs and domed church spires for a breakfast of huevos divorciados and pan de manteca, a traditional sweet and crispy bread.

From Antigua it was an early start and a long drive north — six hours — heading to Alta Verapaz, a region known for its humid cloud forests and fabulous wild orchids. After a journey through jungle-clad mountains and rolling coffee plantations, it felt jarring to see a man on the gates of Hotel Panisté wielding an enormous gun, but it would become a fairly common sight here. And the small, simple hotel felt very peaceful surrounded by gardens, some of which grow produce for the restaurant.

Dusk brought a cacophony of bird song as I sat cross-legged on my balcony; the swooping, hypnotic call of the melodious blackbird backtracked by rufous-browed peppershrike, Grace's warbler and, according to my app, a northern pygmy owl. I gazed out, mesmerised, until I could no longer see the golden-fronted woodpecker bobbing up and down on a banana tree, the lush ferns or the hot pink blooms of flowers that had been glowing in the fading light below. The forest was deafening and otherworldly in the dark; magical to feel that for once I was the intruder.

SIMON DANNHAUER/GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY

The Temple of the Great Jaguar, Tikal

The lounge at Casa Palopo

Under bright blue skies the next morning we arrived at Semuc Champey, a protected nature preserve with dazzling, stepped turquoise natural swimming pools. To earn my swim I hiked first to the site's summit, a short but strenuous 40-minute trail with incredible views of the gorge below. Afterwards I lay floating on my back, gazing up at the sheer ravines on either side.

As I arrived the next day at the Candelaria caves — a magnificent set of caves between Chisec and Raxruha with vast underground networks — I was surprised to learn that we'd be exploring them by way of a tubing tour, riding in individual rubber rings on the river that flows beneath, and not, as I'd imagined, on foot. I took the information on the chin, smiling broadly at the only other two people in my group, a newlywed Parisian couple whose honeymoon I decided it was important not to ruin.

As I lowered myself stoically into the rubber ring dressed head to toe in hiking gear and we bobbed gently into the darkness, our guide informed us that about two thousand bats lived in these caves, to which I nodded interestedly. There seemed to be quite a lot of chirping and clicking going on, but I took some deep breaths, hoping to absorb the French lovers' laissez-faire attitude as they held hands in the beam of my headtorch. When one of them asked our guide a question, however, and I caught the word "piranha" on the wind, I silently lifted my toes from the water.

Asking casually how long the "pitch-black part" would last, I was told 30 minutes; at which point I decided to hell with the honeymoon and sculled furtively up behind the newlyweds, clinging on to their rings until the sun reappeared. There were not, to be clear, piranhas in the water. But I did manage to pull all of my leg muscles by assuming something similar to a yogic "boat pose" for 45 minutes.

A four-hour drive from the caves took us to our final stop, heading even further north to the Peten region. Letting myself into my cabin beside one of the lagoons at Hotel Villa Maya, I was told to expect some unusual noises during the night as there are howler monkeys, toucans, deer and many other creatures on site. I wasn't quite prepared for the volume, and the sound of the monkeys was an eerie thing at 2am.

Tikal, an ancient Maya settlement believed to date from 900BC, is of course spectacular but still I was bowled over by the scale and presence of its stepped stone temples. The journey through protected rainforests to reach the monuments is magical in itself. We spotted toucans, coatis, spider monkeys and a dazzlingly bright green red-lored Amazon parrot that day. My guide showed me a video he'd taken recently of a beautiful jaguar slinking slowly in and out of the trees. The biggest species of snake in the area is the boa constrictor, he told me, "but it's the little ones that will kill you".

Maya communities still perform ceremonies at Tikal today and it is a powerful place. Climbing to the top of Temple IV — thought to be the largest temple built by the Maya — the view is timeless; the tips of other temples emerging through a dense canopy of trees as far as the eye can see. You hardly need to imagine how this kingdom was once consumed by the forest after the Maya left before it was eventually rediscovered in 1848 by the Guatemalan government.

Casa Palopo

Need to know

Emily Sargent was a guest of Journey Latin America, which has 11 nights' B&B from £4,500pp, including flights, transfers and excursions (journeylatinamerica.com)

That afternoon we stopped off at Flores, a small island town linked by a causeway on Lake Peten Itza known for its fabulously colourful buildings. The evening is the time to visit, when restaurants are buzzy and there are often spectacular sunsets. Nativo is a great spot for good quality traditional dishes such as ceviche and tostadas, and has a deck right on the waterfront (mains from £10; @nativo.peten on Instagram). Back at Hotel Villa Maya on my final evening, I watched peach skies fade to blue over the lagoon, the underbellies of clouds painted silver.

I considered how much ground we had covered and how different the trip would have been without the guides I'd had. I'd learnt far more about the country's history and culture, had an inside eye on life — plus, thanks to Christian Lopez, I had navigated a slightly hairy national protest mid-trip that involved blockaded roads and a lot of burly, heavily armed men. I asked him at one point about safety here as a woman, and he told me he did worry for his daughter. Drug cartels, crime and poverty are still a big issue in some places and I witnessed the fringes of some of that.

My overriding experience of the country and the people, however, was a complete delight: warm, open and funny. I had felt dwarfed by the country at times and out of my depth. But I had also been dazzled and awed, reminded of the sheer spectrum of colour, sights and lives that exist. So I guess, despite a few bumps along the way, I'd been in exactly the place I needed to be. And I like to think the honeymooners will see it that way too.

More trips to Central America

Costa Rica self-drive
Sloth-spotting, white sand beaches and mountain hikes are included in this two-week self-drive itinerary with Rickshaw Travel. Staying at locally owned lodges and small hotels, the round trip from San Jose travels to Cahuita for a guided walk through the national park and a snorkelling tour before moving to Turrialba for a volcano hike. You'll visit the Talamanca Mountains, Cloudbridge Nature Reserve, Copey de Dota to spy the quetzal and the Pacific Coast for a dolphin-watching boat trip.
Details Fourteen nights' B&B from £2,290pp, including transfers, car hire and excursions (rickshawtravel.co.uk). Fly to San Jose

Highlights of Nicaragua
From Lake Nicaragua to the Pacific Coast beaches of San Juan del Sur, this 11-night tailor-made trip from Rainbow Tours is a whistle-stop tour of Nicaragua's highlights. You'll start in the university city of Leon, with its Unesco-listed cathedral, and move to the country's most visited city, Granada, before visiting the Mombacho and Masaya volcanoes. After two days on Ometepe Island for hiking and dips in natural pools you can kick back on the Pacific Coast in an ecolodge with ocean views.
Details Eleven nights' B&B from £4,195pp, including flights, transfers, internal travel, excursions and some extra meals (rainbowtours.co.uk)

Family trip to Panama
Keep boredom at bay on an action-packed two-week tour of Panama with the family specialist Stubborn Mule. The round trip from Panama includes a wildlife cruise in Soberania National Park watching for three-toed sloths, zipwiring in the cloud forest at Boquete, a speedboat ride to Unesco-listed Coiba Island for snorkelling and an ebike tour of El Valle de Anton, with options for kayaking and chocolate workshops along the way. Plus there's a guided walking tour of historic Panama City before your flight home.
Details Fourteen nights' B&B for four from £4,670pp, including flights, transfers, internal travel, excursions and some extra meals (stubbornmuletravel.com)

Cross Central America
No need to settle for one Central American country on this epic 24-night journey across the region, which visits Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras. Travelling with a small group and staying in hotels, this fast-paced tour is packed with activities including hiking the Mombacho Volcano, visits to the Maya site of Copan and the Joya de Ceren archaeological site and a walking tour of the Guatemalan city of Antigua.
Details Twenty-four nights' B&B from £4,580pp, including internal travel, excursions and some extra meals (explore.co.uk). Fly to Panama City and from Antigua

Siobhan Grogan

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DAY 3: TRANSFER TO CHOBE NATIONAL PARK, BOTSWANA
Included Escorted Tour: Safari Lodge & Game Drive
Journey across the border into the wilds of Botswana this morning following breakfast. After checking into your safari lodge for your 3-night stay, the adventure truly begins with an exhilarating afternoon game drive through the bush. **Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner Included**

DAY 4: CHOBE NATIONAL PARK, BOTSWANA
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DAY 5: CHOBE NATIONAL PARK, BOTSWANA
Included Escorted Tour: Full-Day Game Drives
Rise with the sun to track the giants of Chobe. On your included game drives, keep your camera ready for vast herds of elephants, grazing zebras, and perhaps even a pride of lions stalking through the bush.

DAY 6: TRANSFER TO VICTORIA FALLS, AFRICA
Included Escorted Tour: Sunset River Cruise
Bid farewell to the bush this morning as you transfer back to Victoria Falls for a 2-night stay. As the day cools, take to the water for a spectacular sunset cruise on the Zambezi River. It's the perfect way to unwind, watching the sky turn gold with a drink in hand. **Breakfast Included**

DAY 7: VICTORIA FALLS, AFRICA
Included Escorted Tour: Victoria Falls
Witness the sheer power of nature this morning on a guided tour of Victoria Falls, known locally as the 'Smoke that Thunders.' As night falls, immerse yourself in the rhythm of Africa. You will be treated to a vibrant dinner and drum show, a feast for both the palate and the ears. **Breakfast & Dinner Included**

DAY 8: FLY TO CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
Today, you will fly south to spectacular Cape Town, flanked by Table Mountain. Upon arrival, you will be transferred to your hotel for a 3-night stay. **Breakfast Included**

DAY 9: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
Included Escorted Tour: Cape Town City
Combine natural wonders with culinary delights. Your day begins with a tour of the city and a ride up Table Mountain (weather dependent) to survey the coast from above. Later, journey into the Winelands to visit a prestigious Stellenbosch estate for an exclusive cellar tour and tasting. **Breakfast Included**

DAY 10: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
Included Escorted Tour: Peninsula, Seal Island & Boulders Beach
Embark on a spectacular journey around the Cape Peninsula today. You will drive past the pristine beaches of Clifton and Camps Bay before navigating the dramatic cliffs of Chapman's Peak. Highlights include a boat trip to Seal Island (weather permitting), a delicious seaside lunch at Bertha's in Simon's Town, and a visit to the charming penguin colony at Boulders Beach. **Breakfast & Lunch Included**

CRUISE

DAY 11: EMBARK 5★ QUEEN ANNE IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
Your land adventure concludes today. We will whisk you from your hotel to the port, where you will embark on Queen Anne. Trade the Table Mountain skyline for the open ocean as you set sail for Southampton. **Breakfast Included**

DAY 13: WALVIS BAY, NAMIBIA

DAY 16: LUANDA, ANGOLA

DAY 18: SAO TOME & PRINCIPE, AFRICA

DAY 20: SAO VICENTE, CAPE VERDE

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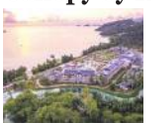

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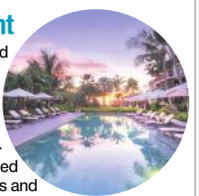

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My big New England road trip

River tours, scenic drives, lakeview hikes and lots of oysters — the four states deliver. By Ben Clatworthy

It is not yet midday, and I've already shucked fresh river oysters and am about to tuck into a steaming hot lobster served with a dangerously generous bowl of clarified butter, a baked potato and corn in the husk at a restaurant overlooking Boothbay Harbour.

My girlfriend, Alix, and I had arrived in this corner of New England a couple of days earlier, and it quickly became clear how well one can eat in Maine, especially along the coast. At Boothbay Lobster Wharf, a working dock, the lunchtime rush is about to begin. Here the lobsters arrive off the boat, are popped into one of the two huge tanks then sold or cooked on site. That job falls to Elijah, from Croatia, who stands over a bubbling cauldron of salt water. "Cooking them in the salty water is what makes them special," he says. "You won't find them fresher."

Our road trip, travelling through three states in ten days — four if you count our entry point of Boston — began further south in bohemian Portland, with its Cape Cod-style houses, port and charming (if touristy) boutiques. It was here in Andy's Pub, an unassuming spot in the port, that we met Anne Archambault, a schoolteacher and part-time guide we'd booked to show us the best bites in town — starting at the pub, with locally brewed lager (yes, at 11am) and a haddock fish taco (£108pp; mainedayventures.com).

"The fish comes from the Harbour Fish Market and the chef walks over each morning to get the catch of the day," she says. "It's handed over from the fishermen on the dock." The story was the same next door at Gilbert's Chowder House, where we tried warming cups of chowder packed with clams, shrimp, haddock and lobster.

Archambault, a linguist and raconteur, told us how during colonial times lobster was so plentiful it would be stacked two feet high along the beaches after storms. Prisoners and servants rebelled against being fed crustaceans seven days a week (although historians argue this is more lore than fact).

Our tour took us past J's Oyster — celebrated as Anthony Bourdain's favourite restaurant in Portland — to Rigby Yard, an upscale brewhouse on the site of the old railway station. Here the vast beer menu is displayed on an old analogue train departure board. We tried the Foundation Epiphany IPA and OBC Blueberry Ale alongside more lobster, served in a warmed brioche roll.

Leaving Portland early the next day we headed north towards Boothbay Harbour, stopping first in Damariscotta for a jaunt on the eponymous river aboard the Teciani to learn about its myriad oyster farms. As we weaved between the oyster farms Captain Chip gave us a running commentary, interspersed with jokes and calls of: "Oysters for Ben!" Sourced from the river's farms and served by the half-dozen or dozen, the oysters are shucked at the boat's tiny bar and paired with crisp French and Portuguese whites drunk from plastic cups (£31pp for two hours, six oysters £14; damariscottariver cruises.com).

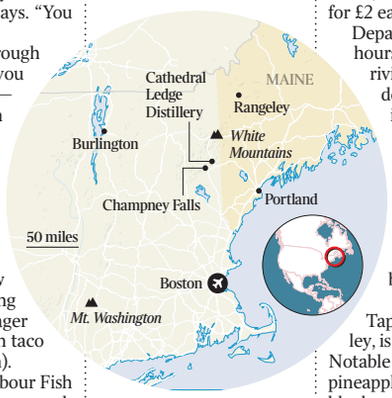
Perched on little wooden stools at the front of the boat, oyster in one hand and wine in the other, we admired the scenery drifting along, pointing out cabins tucked into the pines. Bald eagles and ospreys soared overhead, and we scanned (unsuccessfully) among the buoys for seals.

It's worth spending a couple of relaxing days exploring the area around the river and Boothbay, stopping to jump into lakes (try the Damariscotta Mills Swimming Hole, a few minutes' drive north of the town) or visit the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, which covers more than 325 acres and is the largest in Maine. Try your hand at shucking oysters at one of the farms, such as Glidden Point Oyster Farms for £2 each (gliddenpoint.com).

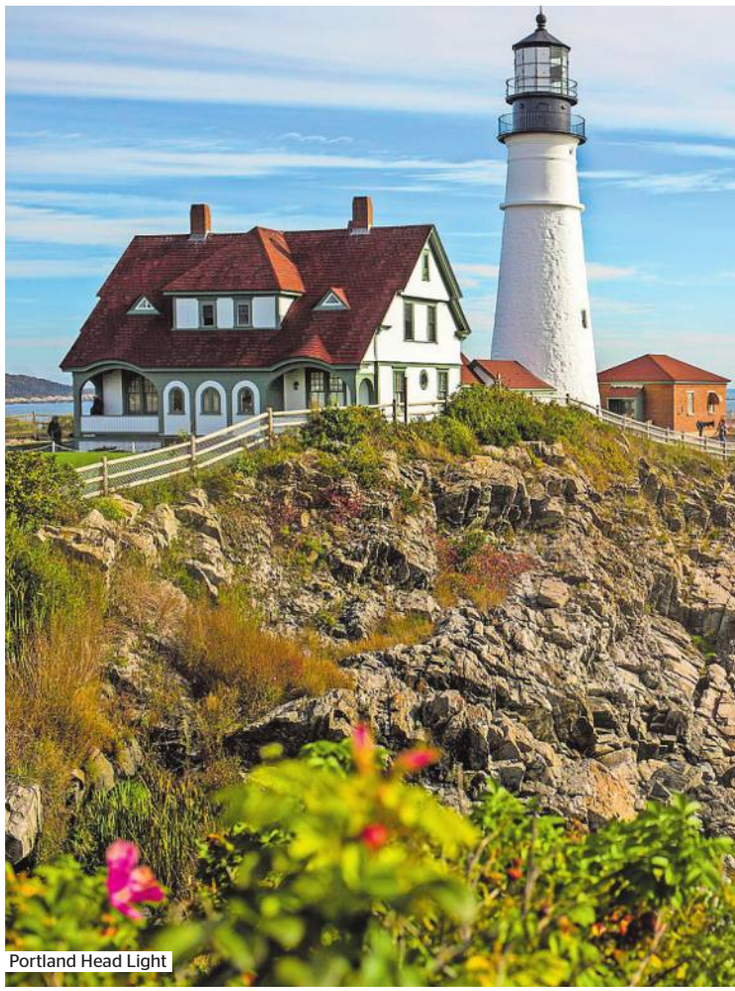
Departing the coast we drive about two hours north to lakeside Rangeley, arriving just as a seaplane splashes down onto the glistening lake. This is a place for adventure. At the Saddleback Mountain ski resort about 15 minutes' drive east of the lake it's possible to rent mountain bikes, amble into the wilderness past quiet "ponds" — some of which have upturned canoes on the banks that you can borrow — or hike to the summit.

We eat well here too. The Portage Tap House, a few miles out of Rangeley, is a must, with 20 beers on draught. Notable dishes include salmon with a pineapple teriyaki glaze and a half-rack of blueberry barbecue ribs (mains from £17; portagetaphouse.com).

New Hampshire comes next, our road trip continuing inland through rolling forest on winding lakeside roads. We take the scenic route south — through towns with names such as Cambridge, Northumberland and Bethlehem — past small farmsteads selling fruit and veg from roadside stalls, stopping to photograph waterfalls. Hills and forests gradually give way to the dramatic peaks of the White Mountains, the highest of which, Mount Washington, has its summit hidden in a swirl of late-afternoon cloud as we arrive at the Wes Anderson-like Omni Mount Washington Resort and Spa at its foot.



A bull moose


Portland Head Light

The best way to reach the summit is on the world's first mountain-climbing cog railway, built in 1869, climbing at 6mph up gradients of 37 per cent. Once steam-powered — each engine using 1,000 gallons of water and a tonne of coal — the carriages are now hauled by biodiesel engines consuming 18 gallons on the three-mile journey (£51; thecog.com).

We spot moose and deer as our brakeman Tommy, who has worked on the railway for 21 years, points out mountains named after presidents — Monroe, Franklin and Eisenhower — on the way to the summit and its weather observatory, which held the record for the highest surface wind speed, at 231mph, from 1934-96. There's an exhibition about the event, but it's the vast views of the rugged mountains that steal the show.

Our next stop would feel more deserved had we hiked to the 1,917m peak, but a friend had recommended Cathedral Ledge Distillery, about 45 minutes away in North Conway. The traditional timber-framed barn looks as though it has stood on the site for centuries, but it was built five years ago and houses the state's first fully organic distillery.

Christopher Burk, who quit his job in finance and poured his family's life savings into starting the business, speaks passionately about how he chose the site above the Saco River because of its "pristine waters". "We now have a four-year-old whiskey, and everything, from milling the grains to bottling, is done on site," he says, standing beneath the pot still. "We use real old-school techniques."

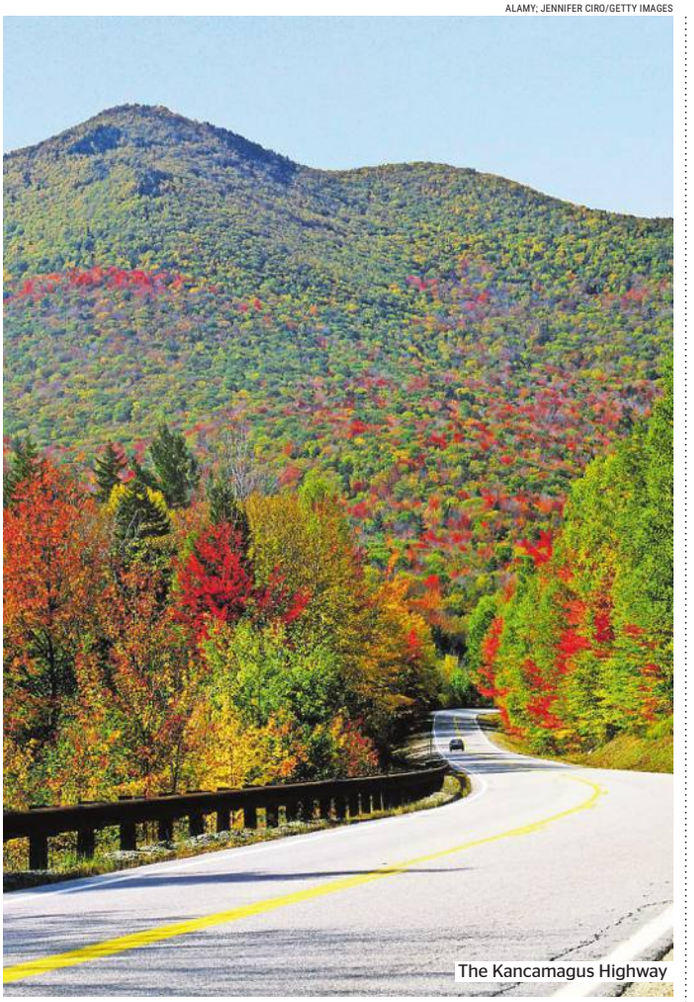
Burk is sampling the latest batch of the distillery's maple liqueur, which recently won bronze at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. It gets the thumbs-up. Next door in the barn's tasting room. I try a flight of five of the 14 spirits Burk makes: bourbon, whiskey, maple liqueur, gin and blueberry vodka. "Almost everything we use is local except the blueberries," he says. "They come from Maine — everyone knows they're the best."

The next day we hit the Kancamagus Highway, one of the region's ultimate road trips. It covers 34.5 miles from Conway to Lincoln and is consistently featured in lists of epic drives. It's most popular in late autumn, when tourists flock from around the world to see the changing of the leaves, but even in mid-September the scenery is magical. We have to resist the urge to stop at every viewpoint as we marvel at the forested slopes that stretch as far as the eye can see.

At the Champney Brook Trail we pull over and park up for a hike, taking the 2.8-mile trail up to Champney Falls. What's normally an impressive waterfall is

— from coast to mountains

ALAMY; JENNIFER CIRO/GETTY IMAGES



The Kancamagus Highway

little more than a trickle after a rainless summer, but the walk through the forest, with dappled sunlight filtering through the canopy, more than makes up for it.

By the time we reach Burlington, Vermont, the autumnal smells of the forest have us in the mood for what is one of the best meals of our trip, at Hen of the Wood. We sit near the open kitchen, watching as the staff — one cooking over open coals, another intricately plating starters, the head chef inspecting every plate — turn out sublime dishes such as a heirloom tomato starter with a corn ricotta, radish-top pesto and marinated zucchini. The delicate tuna carpaccio comes dotted with compressed watermelon and macerated strawberries with a hint of mint. But it is the perfectly charred hanger steak, served on a winter squash puree with a fresno pepper glaze, that blows us away (mains from £22; henofthewood.com).

The next morning we meet Josh Turka, who runs the 5th Quarter Butcher + Provisions in Mad River Green, 50 minutes south. The 39-year-old butcher, who grew up in Philadelphia and lived for a year in Italy, is overseeing the production of sausages when we arrive at his farm shop, which has a deli and an impressive cheese counter. "Sorry it's a little hectic today," he says, pointing to the open-plan butchery area. "We're making 170kg of sausages in this little space. All our meat is local, Vermont-raised, and we bring in whole animals and do all our own breakdowns here. Earlier today there were a couple of pigs hanging here."

The cheese counter is said to be the largest in the state, so naturally we have to try some 12-month aged Cabot cloth-bound cheddar, made using traditional methods in Greensboro, and a deliciously creamy Mt Alice, an organic cow's milk cheese with a bloomy rind that comes from three miles up the road.

Turka is one of the suppliers to Hen of the Wood, and is keen that Vermont is more celebrated for its agriculture. "Montpelier is the only state capital without a McDonald's in the US," he tells me.

In a country famous for fast food, it's the artisans — the lobsterman in Portland, the oyster-shucker on the river, the distiller, the butcher — who give our trip its flavour and character. The landscapes are spectacular, yes, but it's the food and the people who make New England.

Need to know

Ben Clatworthy was a guest of Discover New England (discovernewengland.org). Fourteen nights' room-only from £5,448pp, including flights, car hire and excursions (journeyscape.com)

Where to stay along the way

The Whitney, Boston
You won't want a car in Boston, but it's the best airport for a New England road trip and well worth exploring. The Whitney is a centrally located boutique in Beacon Hill, a short walk down Charles Street to Boston Common. Rooms are smart, in muted tones. Across the Common is Bistro du Midi, an upscale dining room serving seasonal fare (mains from £28; bistrodumidi.com).
Details Room-only doubles from £296 (whitneyhotelboston.com)

Hyatt Place, Old Port, Portland
This is a good budget stay within striking distance of the port and downtown Portland. The rooms are smart, although the bathrooms are slightly dated. Book room-only, and for breakfast take a stroll to the nearby Arabica Coffee Company, which has delicious pastries. The Rigby Yard taproom is a two-minute walk away.
Details Room-only doubles from £100 (hyatt.com)

Spruce Point Inn Resort & Spa, Boothbay Harbour
Sweeping views across the bay and striking sunsets are included with a stay at this grand old resort. There's an outdoor pool by the sea with a jetty down to the water, as well as a spa and tennis courts. The resort, with its main inn and lodges, is set amid forest. There's a formal restaurant, Whiteclover, as well as the more informal Salty Stag.
Details Room-only doubles from £230 (sprucepointinn.com)

Omni Mount Washington Resort, Bretton Woods
Built in 1902, this grand old dame of a hotel has 200 traditional rooms, a speakeasy, a host of restaurants, a spa and a golf course. We got our 10,000 steps in walking around the property. Pause to soak up the magnificent views of the White Mountains from the veranda of the Rosebrook Bar. The upscale 1902 main dining room serves classics such as Maine mussels, mustard-glazed salmon and braised short-ribs (mains from £21).
Details Room-only doubles from £145 (omnihotels.com)

The Inn at Thorn Hill, Jackson Village
For more than 90 years this inn near North Conway has been welcoming guests to its cosy rooms, which have fireplaces, spa baths and mountain views. There's a veranda for evening cocktails as well as a welcoming lounge with board games. The restaurant, Forty at Thorn Hill, is a highlight, serving seasonal dishes that are delicately plated. Kick off with the lobster bisque, then go for the duck breast with a blueberry glaze, served with vegetables and mashed potato (mains from £30).
Details Room-only doubles from £99 (innatthornhill.com)

Hotel Vermont, Burlington
In the centre of buzzy Burlington, close to the waterfront, the Hotel Vermont is a smart city hotel with pared-back rooms and small but functional bathrooms. There are tea and coffee stations on each floor. Downstairs there's a lively bar (with regular live music) that does great cocktails, and the brilliant Hen of the Wood restaurant is next door.
Details Room-only doubles from £161 (hotelvt.com)

Mountain Meadows Lodge, Killington
A short drive out of the town of Killington and its eponymous ski resort is this peaceful retreat overlooking Kent Pond. Set in a 180-year-old red wooden cow barn and farmhouse, the 17 rooms are smartly done, with exposed wooden beams and contemporary bathrooms. There's an outdoor firepit lit nightly and a bar that does light bites.
Details Room-only doubles from £97 (mountainmeadowslodge.com)
Ben Clatworthy

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Get a closer look at Stonehenge

A new tour of the ancient site lets you step inside the circle — and more, says Sarah Baxter

MARIANNE PURDIE/GETTY IMAGES

My guide gives the nod, so I step over the rope and into the inner sanctum. That rope is only slung two inches high — anyone *could* jump it — but guards in high-vis keep a watchful eye, as they must, 24/7, at one of England's most revered sites. I walk to the sarsens and feel almost physically slapped by their muscularity; how can they seem so much bigger now than they did just a few paces away? I've visited these stones several times but never quite like this.

There's been a fee to see Stonehenge for 125 years and it's almost 50 years since the circle itself was cordoned off, with visitors normally confined to looping around the monument. However, there are ways to get inside and the Stonehenge Explorer Tour, which launched this month, is one of them. In groups of no more than five, led by two guides, you're introduced to the wider prehistoric landscape, gain after-hours access to the exhibition and, most thrillingly, step into the stone circle virtually alone. "No other tour gets you closer" is the sell. £295 is the price.

The purpose of the tour is, simply, to add another option at Stonehenge. The top 20 English Heritage sites keep the 400-odd other landmarks standing, Stonehenge disproportionately so. The Wiltshire A-lister welcomed 1,363,252 visitors in 2024; by contrast Tintagel Castle, EH's second most-visited site, recorded 325,538.

There are other ways to access the stones. You could book onto the Stone Circle Experience for guided entry either early morning or early evening, in groups of up to 52 (£70pp). You could join the mass melange of the solstices and equinoxes, when everyone's allowed beyond the rope, free (much to the distress of EH staff who have to clean up afterwards). Or you could get lucky: this month there's an initiative that enters anyone booking an advance ticket into a daily prize draw to win private circle time.

Sarah Baxter among the stones

So, given the options, why choose the new — and, let's face it, pricey — Stonehenge Explorer? The main selling point is its exclusivity. "It's a lot more intimate," says Julia Kirkland, one of the two guides leading my little group; she's wearing a "Respect the Stones" badge and a pendant, gifted by a visiting witch, made of polished Preseli bluestone — the type used at Stonehenge, dragged from Wales. "You learn more too," she says. "The most important thing is that everyone goes away understanding the wider landscape."

This is a key difference of the Explorer Tour. We start at the visitor centre, gathered around a map showing the lie of the land and its liberal peppering of really old stuff, from long barrows to causewayed enclosures. Mesolithic posts were erected hereabouts from around 8500BC, hinting this area of Salisbury Plain held some significance even then. The stone circle, built around 2500BC, is a relative newbie. Basically, visiting the Stonehenge area isn't all about Stonehenge.

To emphasise this point and after a quick look around the reconstructed roundhouses, we hop in a swish Mercedes minivan to visit two further-flung monuments, Durrington Walls and Woodhenge.

"I came here aged 19 in my Mk1 Ford Escort and looked at the site in utter disgust, thinking, 'Is that it?' I couldn't get my young head around it," James McCarraher, our second guide, admits as we look at the circles of concrete bollards that mark the postholes of Woodhenge. "Now, 40 years later, I think, 'Wow.'"

It's so helpful to have guides at sites like this, where there's little to see but much to comprehend. Woodhenge, probably a solstice-aligned temple, sits adjacent to the high, grassy banks of Durrington Walls, the second-biggest henge in the country, now dissected by the A345. Probably containing a thousand houses, this is where Stonehenge's builders lived — the replica roundhouses back at the visitor centre are based on evidence found here. "This was the land of the living," James says. "Stonehenge was the land of the dead."

It's reckoned 4,000 people gathered at Durrington from all corners of the country to work on the stone circle over the autumn-winter months, feasting as they did so: the bones of 38,000 animals have been found, traced from as far as Scotland, Ireland and Wales. It was a seasonal gathering place, "like the Ibiza of its time," Julia says.

I could happily trace the lumps and bumps of this landscape for hours with my knowledgeable guides, but it's time for the main event. We drive back to Stonehenge, park close and walk against the flow emptying the site. "If you want to take your shoes and socks off you can," Julia says before we enter the circle, "but please don't take off anything else." Apparently, guests getting naked or singing, bowl-ringing, meditating and proposing are pretty common events.

And I'm in. It's a cliché, but there really is something can't-put-your-finger-on special about this space. (And you really can't put your finger on it: no stone-touching is allowed.) It was a privilege to see the centuries-spanning graffiti scrawled by Grand Tourists, squaddies and even Christopher Wren; to examine the bullet holes, Bronze Age axe marks and encrustations of rare lichens; to marvel at the ingenious mortise and tenon joints that fixed the lintels and sarsens like Lego. It was a rare treat indeed to stand by the sacred altar stone, believed to have been brought from Scotland, which isn't visible from the outside.

It was also fun to hear some of James's tales: he has a particular fascination with Stonehenge folklore and spoke of headless Saxon ghosts and the spirit of Amesbury Priory's abbess, said to smell like roses. But really, walking here with virtually no other people is spine-tingling enough.

Need to know

Sarah Baxter was a guest of English Heritage, which has Stonehenge Explorer Tours for £295 for adults, £195 for under-18s, no under-12s (english-heritage.org.uk)

Stay near the stones

The Red Lion, East Chisenbury
Hidden away in the Vale of Pewsey, this thatched 18th-century country inn is about ten miles north of Stonehenge. It's Wiltshire's only 3 AA Rosette pub and the food is superb, from dinners to the home-baked bread at breakfast. The five smart guest rooms are in a converted red-brick building a short stroll away, each with patio doors opening to terraces overlooking the River Avon.
Details B&B doubles from £175 (eastchisenbury.com)

The Great Decoy, Hurstbourne Tarrant
Opened in June after a thoughtful renovation, the Great Decoy is a classic country pub at the heart of a quiet village, less than a 30-minute drive to the stones. There's a low-beamed, hop-hung bar serving hearty seasonal dishes, a pretty courtyard garden and eight bedrooms featuring king-size beds, shaggy rugs, antique furniture and eclectic artwork.
Details B&B doubles from £90 (thegreatdecoy.co.uk)

Teffont House, Teffont Evias
Teffont House, tucked into Cranborne Chase's sylvan Nadder Valley, also opened in June 2026. Built in the 17th century, this country retreat has been magicked into an elegant village hotel. There are 17 rooms across the main house, coach house and cottages, where you'll also find a mature walled garden, wellness cabin, croquet court and summerhouses stocked with paints, pencils, telescopes and stargazing guides.
Details B&B doubles from £155 (teffonthouse.com)

Teffont House

Scotland Lodge Farm, Winterbourne Stoke
This sweeping Wiltshire farm just three miles from Stonehenge offers three off-grid, intimate glamping options. The Nissen-hut-style Druid's Barrel (sleeps 2) comes with cosy cabin vibes and a huge fire pit outside. The simple Solstice Yurt (sleeps 4) has a separate kitchen and a hot tub repurposed from a cattle trough. The Stonehenge Silo (sleeps 3) has a hot-trough tub too, a lovely kitchen and bathroom, and a hammock for swinging under the stars.
Details Self-catering doubles from £117 (canopyandstars.co.uk)
Sarah Baxter

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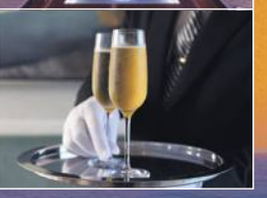

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DAY 2 - Day At Sea Enjoy a day at sea onboard the luxurious Oceania Nautica. Taste the Finest Cuisine At Sea or sip on a glass of wine as part of your House Drinks package, included onboard your voyage (drinks available at select times across all bars and lounges).

DAY 3 - Stavanger, Norway Immerse yourself in the rich culture and natural beauty of Stavanger, home to charming streets, historic landmarks, and breathtaking viewpoints.

DAY 4 - Maloy, Norway Discover the coastal charm of Maloy, a Norwegian town where majestic fjords and the North Sea converge.

DAY 5 - Rosendal, Norway Experience the magic of Rosendal, a charming Norwegian village where nature and culture coexist in perfect harmony.

DAY 6 - Haugesund, Norway Explore Haugesund, Norway's gateway to its iconic, world-famous fjords and magical natural landscapes.

DAY 7 - Day At Sea Relax and unwind on your final day onboard Oceania Nautica, indulging in gastronomic delights, unlimited onboard Wi-Fi and drinks, part of your included House Drinks package.

DAY 8 - Disembark Oceania Nautica In Southampton, UK It's time to head home. After disembarking Oceania Nautica in Southampton, you will make your own way home.

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Outside	C2	~~2199~~	1899
Outside	C1	~~2299~~	1899
Veranda	B2	~~2449~~	2249
Veranda	B1	~~2549~~	2399
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Concierge	A2	~~2799~~	2549
Concierge	A1	~~2949~~	2599
Penthouse	PH3	~~3599~~	3239
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Skagway, Alaska

Days 1-3 **Vancouver, Canada**
Fly to Vancouver, the diverse hub of Western Canada perfectly situated between beautiful mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Spend the next few days discovering Vancouver's highlights. Make use of your included hop-on hop-off bus, which will allow you to get your bearings and discover the city's highlights from bustling China Town to the restaurants of Coal Harbour. A must-visit for your time here is Granville Island filled with quirky markets, independent breweries and a thriving artist scene.

Day 4 **Board Holland America's Koningsdam**

Day 5 **Scenic Cruising the Inside Passage**
Today is all about the journey as you sail through Alaska's legendary Inside Passage. Relax on deck and admire a changing panorama of forested islands, dramatic mountain scenery and the chance to spot wildlife in the calm coastal waters.

Day 6 **Juneau, Alaska, USA**
Arrive in Alaska's remote capital, dramatically set between mountains and water. Whether you choose to explore the lively waterfront, look out for whales or visit the famous Mendenhall Glacier, Juneau offers unforgettable scenery at every turn.

Day 7 **Skagway**
Step into the spirit of the Klondike Gold Rush in this historic frontier town. Skagway is known for its colourful wooden buildings, mountain backdrop and the famous White Pass route, offering a glimpse into Alaska's adventurous past.

Day 8 **Glacier Bay**
Cruise through one of Alaska's most spectacular natural wonders, where immense glaciers, icy waters and snow-capped peaks create a truly awe-inspiring setting. Keep watch for seals, sea otters and soaring eagles as you take in the scenery.

Day 9 **Ketchikan**
Known as Alaska's first city, Ketchikan is rich in Native heritage and waterfront charm. Browse the shops and boardwalks, admire colourful totem poles or simply soak up the atmosphere of this characterful coastal town.

Days 11-12 **Disembark in Vancouver & fly home**

Days not listed are spent relaxing at sea.

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Flights, hotels & transfers - 12 nights fr £5,599pp

Best of Japan self guided tour

Save £200 + 14 day rail pass

The Japanese spirit is strong, warm and incredibly welcoming and on this wonderful tour you will see all the country's highlights. Japan never fails to hit the travel sweet spot being unique enough to give you regular doses of 'Wow!' without any downside, even with the language barrier thrown in.

Flights, hotels, rail pass & transfers - 14 nights fr £3,439pp

Colours of Japan tour 4*

Save £200

This expertly-guided tour takes you from the neon energy of **Tokyo** and **Osaka** to the serene beauty of **Kyoto**, **Nara** and **Kanazawa**. Marvel at UNESCO-listed landmarks such as **Himeji Castle**, **Shirakawa-go** village and **Miyajima**, and ride the **Shinkansen** bullet train.

Flights, hotel & transfers - 9 nights fr £3,615pp

Free and Easy Japan 4*

Save 10% + 7 day rail pass

Stay in the **Hotel New Otani Tokyo**, close to the shops, the **Imperial Palace** , the city's exciting entertainment areas and the famous **Ginza** district before exploring more of Japan, including an exhilarating journey on the **Bullet Train**, with an inclusive rail pass..

Flights & hotel - 4 nights fr £1,659pp

What customers say about their recent trip

Jessica was exceptional and we will most definitely use her again.

Nishma Sharma | Posted 25 Jul

Flights worked perfectly, and Chris' communication was, as always, spot on. This is my first port of call for any travel assistance.

Martyn Clarke | Posted 20 Jul

Isaac very helpful and responsive. Hotel and itinerary great for us but need to think recommending hotel room upgrades as Tokyo hotel room was tiny. Overall fantastic.

Christopher Taylor | Posted 19 Jul | Stayed at **Hotel Resol Kyoto**

Great service as always.

Oscar Hesling | Posted 10 Jul | Stayed at **Art Hotel Osaka Bay Tower**

Fantastic service, really pleased and will definitely book next holiday with DialAFlight.

Zee Nizar | Posted 8 Jul | Stayed at **Mitsui Garden Hotel Gotanda**

Charles delivered a fantastic itinerary for our trip to Japan and South Korea. Top quality hotels in great locations.

Christina Hayward | Posted 30 Jun | Stayed at **Voco Seoul Myeongdong**

Paige was excellent. She listened to what we wanted, we discussed options and she delivered exactly what we asked for.

Vanessa Moore | Posted 15 Jun | Stayed at **Villa Fontaine Grand Osaka Umeda**

Always friendly and helpful. Used DialAFlight for years.

Joanne Herring | Posted 8 Jun

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Days 1-2 **Oslo**
Fly to Oslo, Norway's vibrant capital, and make your way to your hotel before setting off to the explore the city.

Days 3-4 **Flam**
Board the Bergen Railway to the charming village of Flam. You will pass incredible scenery, including the remote wilderness of Finse, a filming location for Star Wars with its stark glaciers and mountainscape. Spend the following day at leisure.

Day 5 **Flam Railway**
Board the Flam Railway and soak up the incredible views as you return to the mountain village of Myrdal. Disembark and join the Bergen Railway which will continue your journey past gorgeous fjords before arriving at the historic city of Bergen.

Days 6-7 **Bergen**
Venture through the UNESCO World Heritage listed district Bryggen; adorned with museums, shops and galleries that leads to the picturesque harbourfront where you will find the historic fish market.

Day 8 **Fly home**

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Days 1-3 **Seville**
Fly to Seville, the regional capital and home to historic architecture, buzzing plazas and lively flamenco clubs. Admire the pretty orange tree-lined streets to Plaza de España, the most famous square in Seville. Take a stroll through the verdant Maria Luisa Park and navigate the labyrinth of cobblestone streets in the Santa Cruz district.

Days 4-5 **Córdoba**
Board the train for a short journey to the medieval city of Córdoba. Spend the afternoon admiring the extraordinary blend of architectural styles of the UNESCO World Heritage 11th Century Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Climb the bell tower for panoramic views of the city and wander outside its awe-inspiring walls to discover quaint hidden plazas.

Days 6-7 **Granada**
Take the train to Granada, a beautiful city at the base of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Get your bearings by meandering the cobbled streets of the Albaicin district, admiring the Carmen houses en route. Discover the beauty of La Alhambra, the spectacular Moorish palace and fortress decked with stunning frescoes.

Day 8 **Fly home**

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A luxurious ride through the Alps on a steam train

The Alpine Belle beside the Main River north of Wurzburg and, left, the dining carriage

Michael Williams enjoys great views, excellent food and sparkling company on the Alpine Belle

You don't have to be a train buff to be stirred by the prospect of travelling in luxury behind a mighty steam engine through some of the most romantic and spectacular scenery in Europe. I'm aboard the Alpine Belle heading into Switzerland from Innsbruck, where the sun is glinting off the mountain tops. It's the third day of an eight-night journey that started in Cologne.

But wait, here are two more of Europe's great luxury trains passing by. The Golden Eagle Danube Express has just rolled in on its sedate journey through central Europe. Meanwhile the grandest dame of all, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, is preening itself on the next platform, all sparkling brass and midnight blue paintwork.

Normally, I would have goggled with envy, but not today. I'm feeling smug about the Alpine Belle, my own luxury train taking us on an odyssey through some of the finest scenic railway lines in the Alps.

From Cologne, the trip is through southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland, staying in Lindau, on Lake Constance, for two nights, two nights in Innsbruck, three nights in Salzburg and one night in Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt.

This is a unique trip — as are all the Belle Trains journeys — distinguished from other luxury trains by veteran steam haulage and overnight stays in five-star hotels. (By contrast, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is hauled by a couple of modest electric freight engines.) Our train is truly bespoke, since Belle Trains run only one service each year.

Next year's special train will be the Emerald Isle Belle, an eight-night steam-hauled tour through the serene countryside of Ireland, starting in Dublin, visiting Donegal, Westport and Killarney before returning to Dublin. Stays will include the five-star Europe Hotel in Killarney as well as the historic Shelbourne in Dublin.

Although the Alpine Belle has splendid vintage carriages (my wife and I are seated at a reserved table in the mahogany-lined piano bar) we do not have to spend the night cooped up in bunks that are the hallmark of most sleeper trains. Instead, we are staying overnight in some of the finest hotels in Europe, ranging from the Ernst Hotel in the shadow of Cologne cathedral — marinated in traditional Teutonic gentility — to the Interalpen hotel at Seefeld, high in the Tyrolean mountains with its dreamy peak-top views and Michelin-starred restaurant. Having a comfortable experience off the train is thanks to Marianne Robertson, wife of the Belle Trains founder, Marcus Robertson. After years with her railway enthusiast husband, Marianne knows that a fondness for rail journeys is about more than trainspotting or rivet-counting.

There are various optional excursions arranged at every stop on the way. Our 120 passengers have the choice of many trips, including to a Mozart concert in Salzburg and the marionette theatre in Lindau, with nearly lifesize puppets performing Mozart's *Magic Flute* (excursions from £60).

Some passengers enjoy an excursion to Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance, where the Zeppelin Museum offers an insight into the cult of the airship. You could enter a reconstruction of the cabin of the Hindenburg and even take a flight on a replica of the real thing — but I chicken out after hearing too many tales of doom.

There is a private *Sound of Music* coach tour of Salzburg as well as a Mozart walk. Staying at the venerable Hotel Bristol, I can look out from my room over the composer's birthplace and conjure up life with the young Wolfgang.

Also on offer is a trip to Hitler's notorious "Eagle's Nest" at Obersalzberg. I'm not alone in feeling I don't have the stomach for this. Instead, I visit the Hotel Sacher for a delicious slice of its sachertorte cake.

As a special treat for steamheads, there is a steam charter along the main line from Salzburg to the Austrian Railway Museum at Ampflwang.

Also thrilling in a different way is a journey behind an ancient cog railway engine as it huffs and puffs into the mountains for a journey on the beautiful Achensee lake in western Austria.

But the best bit of the journey is daily life aboard the Alpine Belle. We are regaled with a superb menu, all freshly cooked in the kitchen car by Swiss chefs, served with a choice of regional wines.

A typical lunch might be a chicken breast balanced with a lemon sauce, sprinkled with pink berry peppers, seasonal vegetables and rice. Dinner might be Tafelspitz, Emperor Franz Josef's favourite braised beef delicacy.

Our steward, Chris Anderson, is a Qantas cabin crew veteran. With his white gloves, he is attentive, even rushing out onto the platform to search for me when he thought I might have missed the train. As the pianist starts to play for the evening I share a Swiss beer with Dany Weigeli, the owner of the carriages, who tells me how he acquired his vintage vehicles at auctions around Europe.

One of his favourites is the double-deck kitchen car from the Das Rheingold express, which travelled between the Hook of Holland and Geneva.

Overseeing everything is our guard, Carsten Ott. With his peaked hat, leather sash and loud bark, he is a larger-than-life version of everything you might imagine German officialdom to be.

Dusk is falling as we arrive at journey's end on the eighth day in the charming spa town of Wiesbaden. Under the historic arched station roof, many passengers go to shake the hand of the driver, empathising over what a punishing, hot and filthy job it is to drive a steam locomotive.

I glance at my Swiss watch and see we are bang on time after 2,200 elegant miles. Before we left the UK, many friends commented on the ruinous time-keeping record of German state railways. However, we seem to have been blessed with the lucky charm of steam. I wouldn't have minded staying on a bit longer in the company of the team, who made this journey such an absolute treat.

But there's always next year. The Emerald Isle Belle will be more leisurely, as befits the bucolic pace of Irish life. But the vintage Irish coaches will be equally luxurious and the steam engines just as delightful. As Marcus says: "Think yourself into the world of Thomas the Tank Engine."

Need to know

Michael Williams was a guest of Belle Trains, which has eight nights' full board on the Emerald Isle Belle in June 2027 from £8,795pp (belletrains.co.uk). Fly to Dublin

More great train journeys

Tour India on the Maharaja Express
Hop off to go tiger-spotting in Ranthambore National Park, take a boat ride on Udaipur's Lake Pichola, visit Jaipur's Amber Fort, tour Jodhpur by tuk-tuk, enjoy a barbecue and folk dancing in the Thar Desert and see the sunrise at the Taj Mahal.
Details Six nights' all-inclusive from £8,899pp, including excursions (hayesandjarvis.co.uk). Fly to Mumbai and from Delhi

Travel along the Spanish coast
Cruise along the northern coast from Bilbao to Santiago de Compostela on board the swish Transcantabrico, which uses historic wagons from the 1920s and has 14 suites, each with a private bathroom. Cultural excursions along the way include visits to Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum, the Gaudí-designed El Capricho and the Cave of Altamira, renowned for its cave art.
Details Seven nights' all-inclusive from £9,628pp, including excursions and internal travel (eltrentrans cantabrico.com). Fly to San Sebastian

Cross Eastern Europe in style
Journey from Istanbul to Budapest aboard the Golden Eagle Danube Express, bookended by a one-night hotel stay, indulging in fine dining as you travel. Tours of the castles in Tsarevets, Sinaia and Brasov are included.
Details Six nights' — four all-inclusive on board, two half-board in hotels — from £10,071pp, including transfers and excursions (goldeneagleluxurytrains.com). Fly to Istanbul and from Budapest

Siobhan Grogan

TRAILFINDERS
THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

singapore
Passion Made Possible

Luxury Singapore & Thailand's Koh Samui

Day 1 Fly to Singapore

Days 2-5 Singapore

Singapore dazzles with futuristic skylines, rich culture, and incredible food. Catch the breathtaking light show at Gardens by the Bay and feast at a buzzing hawker market. A city tour whisks you through iconic Merlion Park and the stunning National Orchid Garden, ending in style with afternoon tea at the legendary Raffles Hotel. Escape to Sentosa Island for tropical nature or sun-soaked beaches. Back in the city, unleash your inner shopaholic on Orchard Road, or uncover the hidden gems of Dempsey Hill, a charming enclave of world-class restaurants and boutiques.

Days 6-12 Koh Samui, Thailand

Fly to Koh Samui and spend your days beachside in complete luxury. Perhaps explore Fisherman's Village and its night market, sampling southern Thai dishes and fresh seafood. For a change of pace, opt to take a boat trip to Ang Thong National Marine Park for swimming and snorkelling.

Days 13-14 Fly home

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Departures | May 2027 to November 2028

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Arrive in Kathmandu, exploring the historical heart of the city, Pashupatinath Temple, Boudhanath Stupa and much more. Then, cross scenic countryside to reach Pokhara on the shores of Lake Phewa, backed by the towering Annapurna Mountains. Enjoy a sunset aarti ceremony by the lake, cruise its glassy waters and enjoy a momo making experience with a local family. Descend from the highlands to the lush flats of the Terai and Chitwan National Park, where you'll safari by jeep, and take a thrilling jungle walk, to spot rhinoceros, Bengal tigers and more.

Fly to Bhutan and travel to capital Thimphu. Explore the city and its fascinating institutions before delving into the scenic beauty of Gangtey Valley, stopping at the sacred Gangtey Monastery to listen to the monks chant their evening prayers. Continue to Punakha; visit nuns and join them lighting traditional butter lamps, explore Punakha Dzong, and enjoy a rural farmhouse experience, tasting local food and watching a demonstration of traditional cooking methods. Your final day in Bhutan features its most iconic sight, Tiger's Nest Monastery. Follow a well-trodden trail to reach it, admiring the views and fluttering prayer flags as you go.

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Late deals

Hit the beach in Cornwall or the Maldives

Coco Bodu Hithi, Maldives. Below: a hut in the Fagaras Mountains, Romania

UK

Recharge on a Somerset estate

Life is flourishing at 42 Acres, near Frome. The storks are nesting, the beavers have raised several broods of kits and there are wild cats in the woods. If you long to flourish alongside them, you'll be glad to know that the holiday lets on this self-styled regenerative estate in Somerset are discounted by 20 per cent when you add the 20%August promotion code. You'll have more than 42 acres to enjoy too. The estate has quadrupled in size since it was founded in 2015, and offers add-on activities including foraging, lake swimming and rewilding walks. From August 24 four nights' self-catering for six in Deer Cottage costs £1,248 (42acres.com).

Cornish cliff walks

The search tools on Sykes Cottages' special offers webpage make deal-hunting easy, and they're turning up some beauties for a last-minute Cornish escape, among them Blue Vista. An unfussy four-bedroom apartment, it's a short, sharp walk uphill from the sheltered sands of Carbis Bay near St Ives, but worth every inch of the climb for the sake of the sea views from its balcony. Then, when you're bored with the beach, sensational cliff walks await at nearby Zennor. From August 29 seven nights' self-catering for eight is down £500 to £2,429 (sykescottages.co.uk).

Hotel with spa in Whitby

Whatever weather our new climate has planned for the end of summer, Saltmoore is sitting pretty. Just north of Whitby, the upmarket hotel is a relaxed and richly coloured launchpad for beach days, windswept moorland walks and rides on the North York Moors Railway, as well as vampire-hunting around Whitby Abbey. And if the heavens do finally open, the hotel's Sanctuary Spa awaits. With its Stay a Little Longer offer you can get up to 20 per cent off bookings of more than two nights. From August 24, for example, three nights' B&B for two starts at £704, down from £880 (saltmoore.co.uk).

EUROPE

Romanian mountain adventure

The Fagaras Mountains are a place of wonder: remote, forested and home to Europe's most complete population of big mammals, including bears, lynxes, bisons, boars and wolves. This one-week guided tour aims to give you a taste of the region's diversity, as well as treating you to nights in a remote cabin, an equestrian centre and a restored country mansion. You'll get an insider's view of the prodigious efforts being made to protect and nurture this extraordinary environment. From September 13 seven nights' full board is down 15 per cent to £3,612pp (theeuropeannaturetrust.com). Fly to Bucharest.

See Florence in style

Dominating a bend in the Arno River just upstream from Florence, Villa La Massa has hosted cardinals, artists and aristocrats over the years — as well as David Bowie and Iman's 1992 wedding. Now, in its modern guise as a 54-room hotel, it can host you for a discounted late-summer break just as the city's annual tide of tourists begins to ebb. With Kirker, four nights for the price of three in September starts at £2,198pp, B&B, including flights and the hotel's free shuttle to the Ponte Vecchio (kirkerholidays.com).

A beachfront Mallorcan apartment

If you've decided that the only answer to Europe's heat is the sea, Pine Walk Apartment on the northeast coast of Mallorca looks like the perfect perch. Set on Port de Pollenca seafront, it's a modern three-bedroom flat — and the only thing between you and the water is an olive tree and strip of sand. Sunrise dips. Evening dips. Moonlight dips. All are on the cards, with soothing air-conditioned siestas in between and a £500 discount if you book the week from August 22. Find it on Vintage's travel's late-availability webpages, where seven nights' self-catering for five costs £2,895 (vintagetravel.co.uk). Fly to Palma.

Cruise the Douro Valley

Uniworld's Portugal, Spain and the Douro Valley itinerary is designed for culture vultures as well as oenophiles. Alongside several wine tastings, the core seven-night cruise includes excursions to medieval Guimaraes and the richly textured town of Salamanca. The trip also has three nights in a five-star Lisbon hotel, giving you a chance to catch up on the city's vibrant culinary scene and its newly refurbished Calouste Gulbenkian Museum of Art. Book selected dates in 2027 before August 31 and you'll get the Lisbon leg of the journey free — starting from £3,399pp, all-inclusive, including flights (uniworld.com).

Spain for October half-term

Consider this holiday package to the swanky Puente Romano Marbella resort in southern Spain an insurance policy against the autumn blues. Available through the luxury specialist Carrier, it includes an accommodation discount of up to 25 per cent and is available for most of October. From October 24 (at the start of half-term) seven nights' B&B for two adults and one child staying in a junior suite starts at £3,353pp, including flights. You could put some of your £650pp saving towards a feast at the onsite branch of Nobu. Call 0161 826 8917 to book (carrier.co.uk).

A Greek island cruise for 2027

Discounted cabins on Celebrity Cruises' 2026 options are hard to find after the success of its big summer sale. But there are plenty of 2027 options, including this June 14 Greek Isles and Malta itinerary on board Celebrity Xcel. Besides the buzz of a big, cutting-edge ship there's plenty to look forward to. Ports of call include historic Valletta and the party island of Mykonos, while two full days at sea give you time to explore the ship's restaurants, pools and spa. Seven nights' full board in a Prime Concierge Class cabin is down £1,209 to £1,751pp (celebritycruises.com). Fly into Barcelona and out from Athens.

LONG HAUL

See the best of Central America

Five nations feature on Intrepid's 16-day Central American Journey. And as you zig-zag your way from Guatemala to Costa Rica through Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, Maya history is acknowledged amid the ruins of Copan, and you'll meet the locals on cookery demonstrations and market tours. But mostly Mother Nature is the focus — in cloud forests, on Pacific beaches and beneath the mighty Arenal Volcano. From September 2, 15 nights' room-only is down 20 per cent to £1,376pp, including some meals (intrepidtravel.com). Fly into Antigua and out of San Jose.

A new riad in Marrakesh

A holiday of delicious contrasts awaits at the newly opened Palais Beit Al Noor in Marrakesh. You'll mix breakfasts at its rooftop restaurant with sorties into the bustling alleys of the historic Zaouiat Lahdar district, and the intense heat of the Moroccan sun with the deep shade of your riad's three courtyards. With room prices in September down 15 per cent you'll get a sense of luxury that won't break the bank: B&B doubles start at £211 a night, including one free dinner in the rooftop restaurant (palaisbeitalnoor.com). Fly to Marrakesh.

Shoulder-season Maldives

Usually November is when the Maldives rainy season starts to lift, especially in the north. So this 30 per cent early bird discount to Coco Bodu Hithi on the North Malé Atoll looks especially enticing. You'll stay in one of its enormous private-pool beach villas, and with scuba diving, water sports and big game fishing on the activities menu there's plenty to do between the massage and meals that are part of the deal. From November 14, for example, seven nights' full board starts at £2,148pp (cococollection.com). Fly to Malé.

Sean Newsom

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Your itinerary

Cairo, Egypt (three nights) – Luxor – Esna – Edfu – Kom Ombo – Aswan – Cairo

What's included

- Return international and domestic flights
- Three nights' five-star hotel stay with breakfast in Cairo
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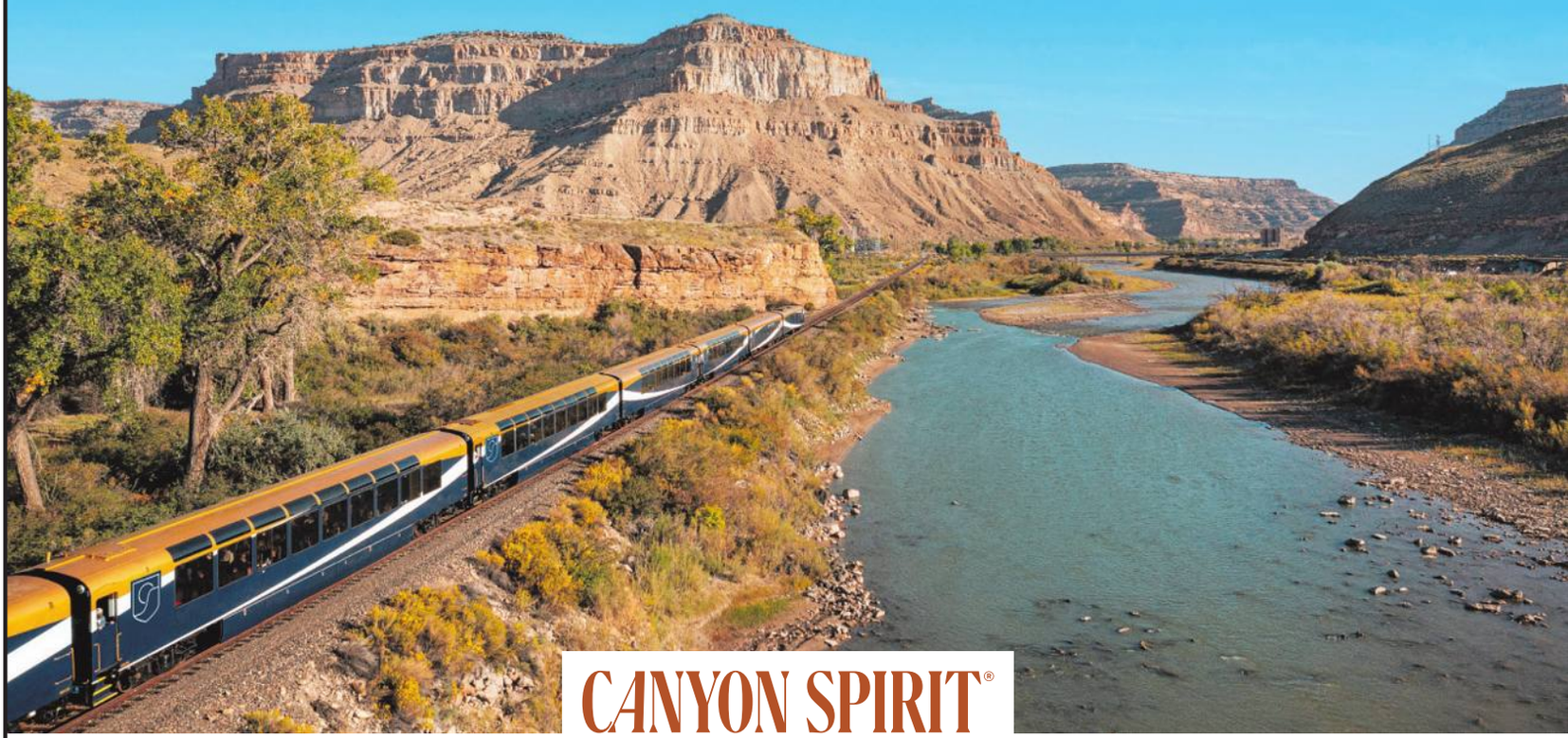


Journey through Colorado's vast wilderness and mountain landscape to Utah's vibrant red rocks and endless national parks.

Day 1 Denver to Colorado Springs
Fly to Denver. Upon arrival pick up your car and drive south to Colorado Springs.

Days 2-3 Colorado Springs
Explore the Rocky Mountain peaks that surround Colorado Springs, hike through the bright red peaks of Garden of the Gods Park or perhaps head to Pikes National Forest.

Day 4 Denver
Drive back to Denver and drop off your car.

Days 5-6 Canyon Spirit
Board the iconic Canyon Spirit train in Denver for the two day Rockies to the Red Rocks journey. Sit back and relax with exceptional comfort and service as you take in views of rugged canyons and the Colorado River before arriving in the resort town of Glenwood Springs. Spend the night in a comfortable hotel before boarding the train for day two of your journey.

Day 7 Moab
Enjoy some time exploring Moab, the gateway to Arches National Park.

Day 8 Monument Valley
Pick up your car and journey west to Monument Valley, famous for its towering sandstone formations.

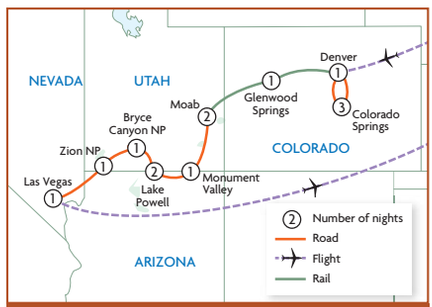
Days 9-10 Lake Powell
Drive to Lake Powell, where you can visit iconic sights including Horseshoe Bend and Antelope Canyon.

Day 11 Bryce Canyon NP
Continue west to the otherworldly landscapes of Bryce Canyon National Park, hike and admire the gravity-defying rock formations.

Day 12 Zion NP
Drive to Zion National Park, famed for its spectacle of colourful rocks, sheer cliff faces and forests.

Day 13 Las Vegas
On your final day head to the bright lights of Vegas.

Days 14-15 Fly home



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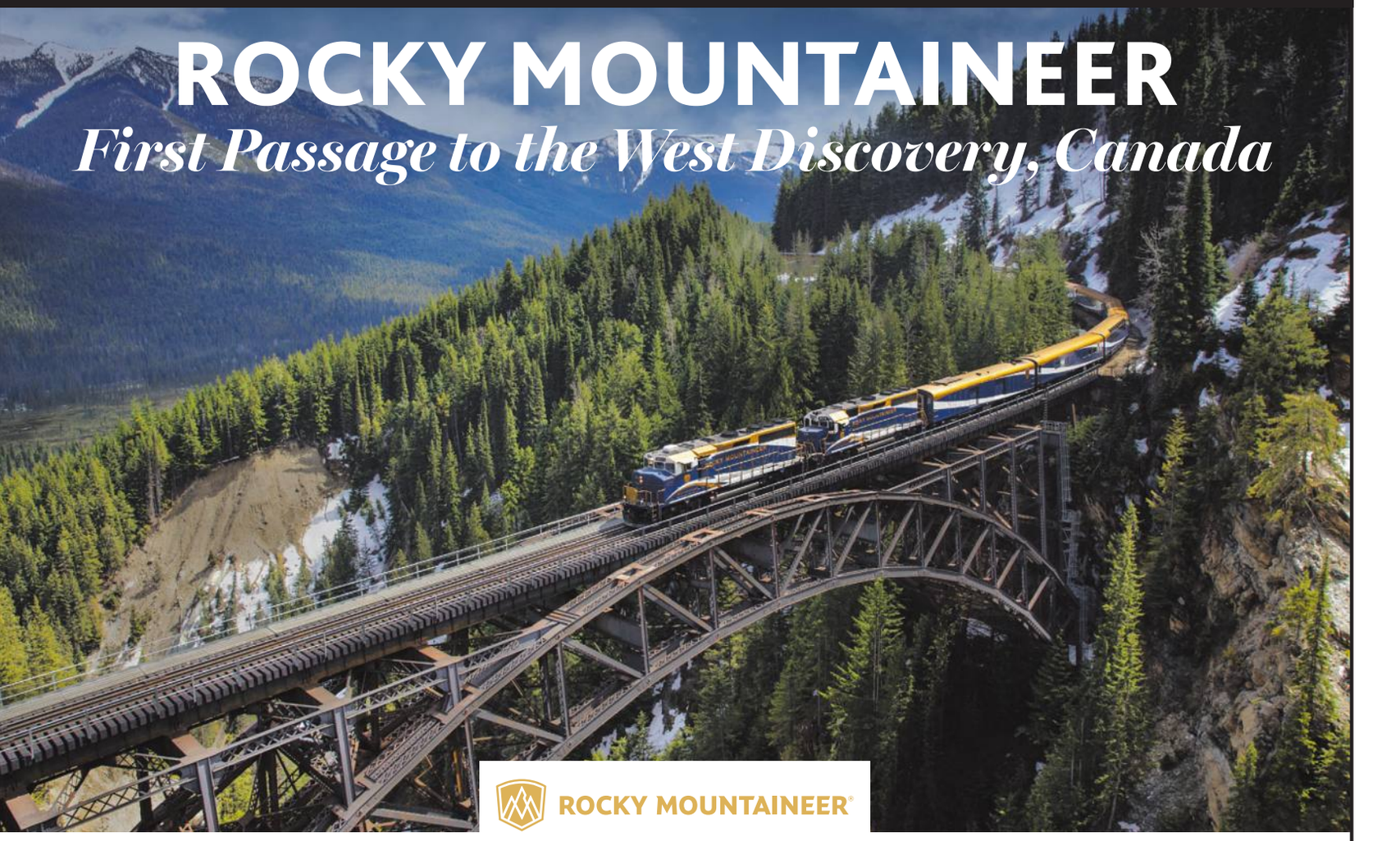

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Days 1-2 Vancouver

Fly into Vancouver and transfer to your hotel. Vancouver has activities for all interests, including visiting historic Gastown, dining in lively Yaletown, or enjoying a walk on the Stanley Park Seawall. No matter what you choose to do, the Coast Mountains and the Pacific Ocean surround you.

Days 3-4 Rocky Mountaineer

Departing early in the morning, travel onboard Rocky Mountaineer. Experience lush green fields and winding river canyons. Highlights include the rushing waters of Hell's Gate in the Fraser Canyon and the snow-capped peaks of the Canadian Rockies. End your first day with a restful night in Kamloops. Arrive into Lake Louise in the evening of day 4.

Day 5 Lake Louise

With its unique history and picturesque scenery, Lake Louise will not disappoint. Learn about the local wildlife, paddle the lake by canoe, or simply relax amongst the beauty.

Days 6-7 Banff

Banff has activities for all, from relaxing in hot springs and exploring the bustling town, to outdoor wildlife adventures.

Day 8 Calgary

Begin the morning with a sightseeing tour of Banff. Among the points of interest are Bow Falls and the Hoodoos. Before your transfer to Calgary, enjoy a visit to the Banff Gondola.

Days 9-10 Fly home

Lake Louise

Banff

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The Times hotel guide Arthouse Glasgow

Rooms and suites 8/10
Food and drink 8/10
Where is it? 8/10
Overall score 8/10

The sandstone façade

CODY BAMFORD

A Classic room

No 129 Bath Street, all imposing Glaswegian sandstone, was formerly the HQ for the Glasgow school board and Strathclyde's regional council education department. This cerebral past has carried through to the Arthouse — note the original terrazzo floor in reception, the stained-glass windows and the schoolhouse-style white and green metro tiles of the hallway — which opened in June. And now there's a distinct whiff of art college: canvases from the artist David Iain Brown hang on the walls, and the hotel partners with the Glasgow School of Art to commission an emerging artist on an annual rotation. The centrepiece is the Victorian accordion-door lift installed in 1911, and while no longer hydraulically operated, it has barely changed.

Rooms and suites

The design has been stripped back to basics by Alessio Nardi of the London studio A-nrd, which means timber floorboards, original coving and steel strips to cover electric cables. Elegant off-white and racing green is the main colour palette, together with a lot of dark wood and raw steel, while details include textured green throws and pendant lamps that have been blown by hand by the artist Vicky Higginson. The 30 sq m loft rooms are the best in the house, with double-height ceilings, squat vintage green lounge chairs and marshmallowy superking beds on low wood platforms.

At the other end of the spectrum, affordable "pocket" rooms, which open in September, start at £99 and are on the basement level. Note that there are no twin rooms, but there are family rooms that sleep four. Bathrooms take their design cues from the rooms — spartan and faintly reminiscent of a school washroom, although thanks to gorgeous products from Verden they smell heavenly.

Food and drink

The modern Italian restaurant Celentano's has relocated from Glasgow's East End to the ground floor of Arthouse. It's an extremely stylish space, with white walls, floating shelves and wooden tables. The menu is divided into snacks and antipasti — everybody recommends the cod doughnuts with kimchi — primi (pasta made fresh in house) and secondi (mainly fish and beef). But leave room for the racy deconstructed affogato and the house cocktails. Breakfast, for an extra £17.50pp, is underwhelming, with a small "farm table" selection of muffins, Spanish omelette, sourdough and granola.

Cathy Adams was a guest of Arthouse Glasgow, which has room-only doubles from £99; mains from £21 (arthouse hotelglasgow.com)

What else is there?

There is a stylish lounge space on the ground floor, with squashy fabric banquettes, leather chairs and sofas. It acts as a de facto bar and hangout space.

Where is it?

Ten minutes' walk from Central Station and Buchanan Street for shopping. It's an arty location; the independent cinema King's Theatre is down the street and Glasgow Film Theatre is nearby.
Cathy Adams

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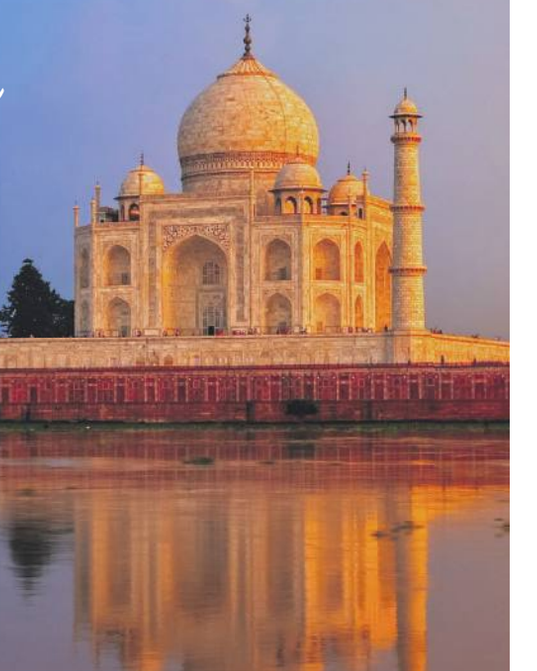
- Witness the riverside prayer ritual of Ganga Aarti



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Day 5 **Cai Be – Sa Dec – Tan Chau, Vietnam**
Go ashore to see the Cai Be Church, the tallest church in the Mekong Delta, and visit manufacturers of rice paper and coconut candy

Day 6 **Tan Chau – Cambodia Border Crossing – Phnom Penh**
Transfer to a small boat for a journey along the tiny tributaries that snake around Tan Chau. Disembark for a rickshaw tour and visit a local rattan weaving workshop. After lunch, take a small boat to discover authentic rural life on Evergreen Island

Day 7 **Phnom Penh, Cambodia**
Today, choose from a visit to Killing Fields and Genocide Museum, Cyclo Ride, the National Museum or Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda

Day 8 **Phnom Penh – Oudong – Koh Chen, Cambodia**
★Signature Experience×: Buddhist blessing ceremony

Day 9 **Phnom Penh – Oknha Tey – Angkor Ban, Cambodia**

Day 10 **Angkor Ban – Koh Pen – Kampong Cham, Cambodia**
Take a guided walk of Angkor Ban, a village awash with stories of Cambodia's cultural history, and one of the few traditional villages that survived the Khmer Rouge regime
★Signature Experience×: Tuk Tuk Tour of Koh Pen

Day 11 **Kampong Cham – Siem Reap, Cambodia**
Disembark the ship and transfer to the *Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf & Spa Resort‡* for your three night stay

Day 12 **Siem Reap, Cambodia**
★Signature Experience×: Sunrise at Angkor Wat

Day 13 **Siem Reap, Cambodia**
Choose from Tuk Tuk Ride to Senteurs d'Angkor, Quad Bike Adventure, APOPO HeroRATs Tour and Landmine Museum, Horse and Cart Ride, Khmer Cooking Class, Siem Reap Shopping Adventure or Khmer Massage
★Signature Experience×: Gallery Visit with Khmer Dinner and Apsara Performance

Day 14 **Siem Reap, Cambodia**
Transfer to airport for overnight flight to London

Day 15 **Arrive in London**

Itinerary is based on 30th January 2027 and other dates may operate in reverse

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★Sunrise at Angkor Wat★
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★Tuk Tuk Tour of Koh Pen★
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Travel doctor Solving your holiday dilemmas

Julia Brookes
Consumer expert

ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES

An ngalawa off Diani beach, Kenya. Below: All Saints Church, York

Q I have a big birthday in 2028 and my daughter, my granddaughter — who will be 15 by then — and I have promised ourselves a special holiday to celebrate. We'd like to spend time at an elephant sanctuary and love a nice beach as well as a good walk. Somewhere in Africa would be great and my budget is up to £8,000. What can you suggest?
Carol Mills-Field

A There's a wonderful sanctuary for orphaned elephants in Nairobi National Park run by the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust. If you adopt an elephant (which costs £35 a year) you'll be invited to an exclusive foster parent visit to see your chosen adoptee in their night-time enclosure and talk to their keepers. There's also a daily feeding session open to the public that has to be booked well in advance. Stay a short drive away at the Emara Ole-Sereni hotel, which overlooks the park, then fly to Mombasa and stay at the laid-back Baobab Beach Resort and Spa in Diani. The safari specialists 2By2 Holidays (part of Wexas Travel) can tailor-make this trip for £8,000 for the three of you in June 2028, including flights and transfers, two nights' B&B at Emara Ole-Sereni in a triple superior room, a visit to the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and four nights' all-inclusive at Baobab Beach in a triple sea-facing room (2by2holidays.co.uk).

Q My husband and I are planning to spend five nights over the Christmas period in or near York, visiting family but not staying with them. We'd like a good-quality hotel or luxury self-catering and our budget is £2,000. Any ideas?
Greta Fooks

A You have a much better chance of enjoying a family Christmas if you're visiting but not staying! On your budget I'd suggest No 1 by Guesthouse York, an excellent boutique hotel just outside the city walls. Rooms are chic and cosy with quirky details such as doll's houses containing tea and coffee. A room-only double for five nights from December 23 starts at £1,374 (if you join the loyalty programme) and parking is £35 a day. Or book the swish two-bedroom Waterside Retreat in Ryedale House, beside the River Foss. You will get your own parking spot and five nights' self-catering for up to four costs £1,191 from December 23 (staysyork.com).

Q Four women in our forties are planning to escape to Porto in northern Portugal for four days this autumn. Two of us are leaving small children behind, so we'd like to make every minute count. We're looking for somewhere with character rather than ultra-luxury: a stylish, comfortable hotel or apartment that's within easy reach of culture, brilliant restaurants and bars, with beaches close enough for a swim. We're on a mid-range budget. Where should we stay and what shouldn't we miss?
Simone Talfourd

A I would suggest somewhere like the beautifully designed Hotel Tipografia do Conto by Casa do Conto in the arty district of Cedofeita. B&B doubles start at £171 in September and it has an outdoor pool (tipografiadoconto.com). This area is surrounded by great bars and restaurants and is about a 15-minute walk from the centre, where you'll find great shopping: Benamor, Costa Nova, Claus Porto and A Vida Portuguesa are all top-notch Portuguese brands. It's an easy trip by the metro to the beach and it's fun to do a tour and tasting across the river in one of the many port houses that line the waterfront in Vila Nova de Gaia. If you want to make a day of it, take the fabulously scenic train ride to the Douro Valley and stop off at Pinhao. From there you can walk to vineyards such as Croft's Quinta da Roeda and perhaps book a picnic in the vineyards (croftport.com).

Q I'm 77 and due to recent medical issues my bank has declined my travel insurance. Although my cancer is now in remission and a subsequent heart condition is well controlled, I had to answer "yes" to most of the questions relating to medical conditions within the past 12 months. I also have a few other longstanding health issues but insurers have always accepted these in the past. I would never consider travelling abroad unless I have comprehensive cover for all my medical conditions, but even if I can obtain cover, I'm reluctant to pay several thousand pounds in premiums for a two-week holiday in Europe (my wife and I tend to take two of these a year). Do you have any suggestions?
Howard Morgan

A The good news is that I've found two companies who will cover you. But as you feared, neither is cheap. Free Spirit can offer single trip (not annual cover) insurance for a two-week European holiday (freespirittravelinsurance.com). Its Standard policy would cost £973 but doesn't cover cancellation or delays; for this you'd have to upgrade to Super at £1,218 . All Clear will offer you annual cover at £1,637 for Gold Plus cover, which includes £15 million medical cover as well as cancellations and delays. For single-trip cover it suggested you get in touch when you have a specific trip in mind (allcleartravel.co.uk). While you're pleased you can get insurance, you have balked at the prices and have now decided to holiday in the UK instead.

Contact us

If you have a gripe, suggestion or question relating to your holidays, please email **traveldoctor@thetimes.co.uk**

Don't put up with this

Booked hotel room jumped in price

My 18-year-old son and his friend booked their first "adult" holiday to Rome for the end of this month, paying about £250 each for flights and accommodation with Loveholidays. We did all the research and it's a package holiday so it's Atol-protected. A few days later my son was informed by Loveholidays that a mistake had been made: the hotel price was wrong and it could no longer honour the booking. He has a choice to cancel and receive a refund or pay over £1,000 to secure the holiday he'd previously booked and had confirmed. As students they can't afford the extra cost, and also a friend who, on hearing of their holiday, was jealous and booked himself on the same flight but a different hotel is now left to go alone. It's incredible to me that the consumer is the one to lose out despite the error being the travel company's. Can you help?
Ruth Turner

Unless the cost of the trip is so low that any reasonable person would spot the mistake, the travel company should honour the price paid. After I sent Loveholidays details of your case, it conceded its hotel supplier mistakenly sold the rooms your son booked at the wrong rate. Loveholidays said: "We are very sorry Mr Turner was incorrectly advised of a price increase in this instance. We have been in touch to confirm his booking will be honoured at the original price and to offer our sincere apologies." It has also upgraded the booking so your son and his friend now have a double room each instead of singles.

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THE TIMES

Saturday August 15 2026

saturday review

Inside Your 7-day guide to TV, radio and films

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Our critics' pick of the best books coming soon

Top of the toffs

Why Lady is the comedy film of the summer

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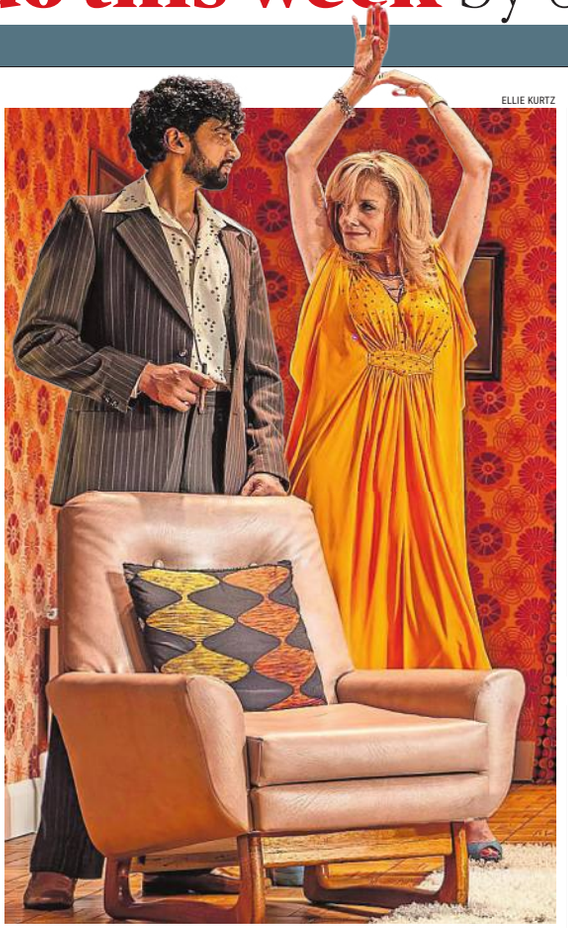
What to do this week by our critics

My hot ticket

Clive Davis
chief theatre critic

Abigail's Party

Time to dig out the nibbles again. Tamzin Outhwaite reprises the role of the status-conscious hostess Beverly as Nadia Fall's revival transfers to the West End. It's half a century since Mike Leigh's dark comedy had its first airing: Alison Steadman later brought Beverly into millions of homes in a television performance that has become the benchmark for all subsequent versions. This time the comedian Kevin Bishop plays Bev's aspirational husband, Laurence, while Omar Malik takes the role of Tony, the laconic guest. Prepare to start cringing as the passive-aggressive battle of wills begins to get out of hand. As in that Victorian classic *The Diary of a Nobody*, domestic etiquette becomes a battlefield.
Harold Pinter Theatre, London, to Sep 19



ELLIE KURTZ

Tamzin Outhwaite and Omar Malik star in Abigail's Party at the Harold Pinter Theatre. Below: Ariana Grande

Visual art

Julio Le Parc: Light. Colour. Action

Laura Freeman

The school summer holidays stagger morosely onwards and activities must be found. Take older children and teenagers to prod, press and wonder at the curious kinetic and interactive sculptures of the Argentinian artist Julio Le Parc, who died earlier this year at the age of 97. From hypnotic robotic installations to shimmering, mirrorball light shows, this is a transfixing exhibition. Promise an ice cream to the winner of Le Parc's tricksy artistic arcade games.
Tate Modern, London, to May 3, 2027

Pop

Ariana Grande: The Eternal Sunshine tour

Yasmin Choudhury

Ariana Grande's ten-night residency at the O2 in London carries all the weight of a grand curtain call. After its conclusion, the pop superstar plans an extended retreat from public life, after speculation over her health and appearance. The European-exclusive run makes for a victory lap through one of modern pop's most formidable catalogues, now bolstered by her eighth album, *Petal*. Expect slick choreography, plenty of attitude and that astonishing four-octave voice, soaring from breathy R&B to her signature whistle register.
The O2, London, tonight-Sep 1

Classical

Berlioz's Requiem

Richard Morrison

Hector Berlioz specified 400 performers for his 1837 *Grande messe des morts*, including four offstage brass bands. This BBC Proms performance may not quite reach that total, but the sheer sonic splendour of Berlioz's enormous conception should be overwhelming. And the conductor, Antonio Pappano, is unlikely to do what his predecessor notoriously did at the 1837 premiere (to Berlioz's fury): put down his baton and take a pinch of snuff at the most crucial tempo change in the work.
Royal Albert Hall, London, tonight, also streamed on BBC Sounds

Dance

Ihsane

Debra Craine

Ihsane Jarfi was a gay Moroccan man who was tortured and killed in a homophobic attack in Belgium 14 years ago. Now he's the subject of Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's new production at the Edinburgh International Festival. In *Ihsane* the Belgian choreographer, who has family roots in Morocco, explores grief in a show that's also inspired by the culture of Africa and the Middle East.
Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, Tue-Thu

Comedy

Julian Clary: Fully Dilated

Dominic Maxwell

Stand aside, plucky up-and-comers, a modern comedy mainstay has joined the Fringe fray. The "renowned homosexualist" promises "no more hiding behind a persona" as he reveals intimate secrets in his first Fringe show for 17 years. Normal service will be resumed at Christmas when he stars alongside French and Saunders in the London Palladium panto.
Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, to Aug 23

Film

Tony

Larushka Ivan-Zadeh

Tony follows the recent prestige-biopic trend (*A Complete Unknown*, *Springsteen: Deliver Me from Nowhere*) of serving up one choice formative morsel rather than the full cradle-to-grave smorgasbord. Drawn from the early chapters of the chef Anthony Bourdain's cult 2000 memoir, *Kitchen Confidential*, the film introduces us to Tony (a star-making turn by Dominic Sessa), aged 19, long before fame hit. For the most part this is a rollicking, surprisingly sunny coming-of-age story. Picture *The Bear* with less angst and more innocence — a TV phenomenon that owes Bourdain a much acknowledged debt.

What we learnt

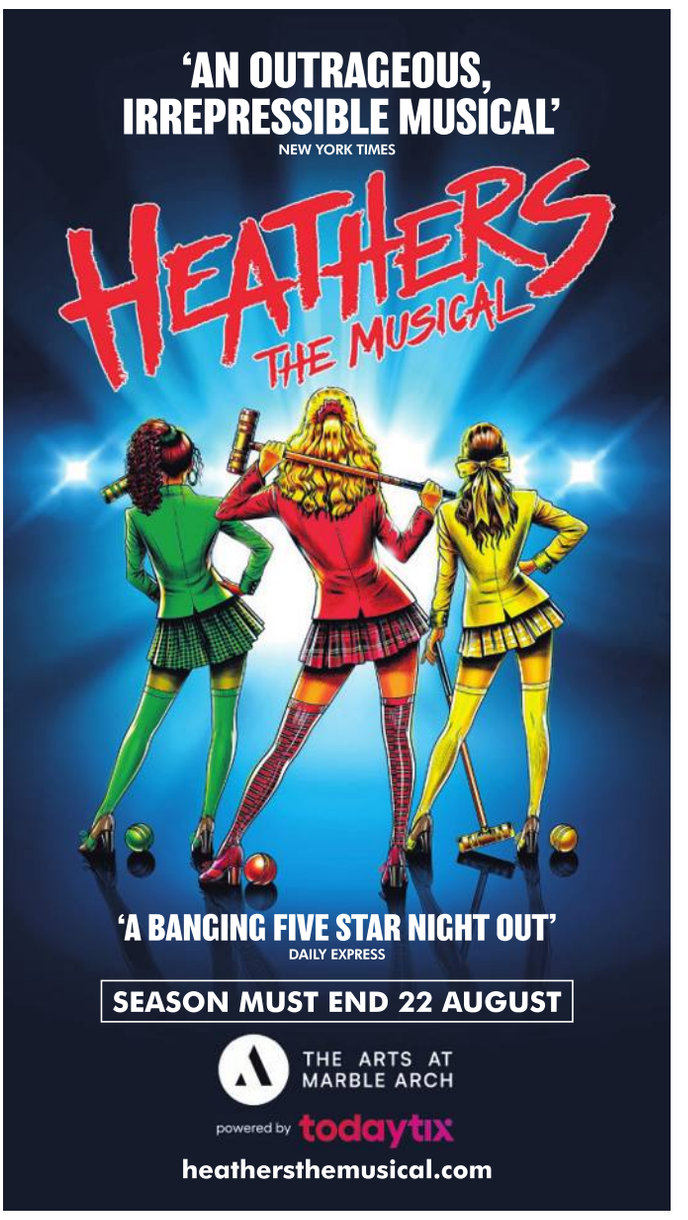
Hockney in La-La land

David Hockney's much vaunted 1960s LA period got off to a bad start. His first apartment was in the converted garage of a run-down house. The oven was full of cockroaches. *Page 10*

They called him the Jackal

The notorious "freedom fighter" (or, rather, gun for hire and vicious killer) Carlos the Jackal was given his moniker by a British tabloid in homage to Frederick Forsyth's spy novel *The Day of the Jackal*. After a disastrous police raid on Carlos's Paris apartment in June 1975, during which he shot two officers (and one terrorist colleague) dead, photographs of the scene revealed Forsyth's novel in a bookcase. The Sun subsequently published a photo of Carlos with the caption "The face of the Jackal". He adored his new nickname, saying: "The jackal is a nice little animal, you know." *Page 15*

Inside today Your 7-day guide to TV and radio **Pages 19-43**



cover story

Heirloom-maxxing, peacocks and

A new comedy film about an eccentric lady of the manor gets the 21st-century aristocracy absolutely right, says Sophia Money-Coutts

Lady is a new film that tackles the barking world of the aristocracy. The eccentric Lady Isabella Ravenhyde (Sian Clifford, aka Fleabag's sister, Claire) lives in a vast, Victorian house in Norfolk, where she rattles around almost entirely alone, bar the odd appearance from a nervous, put-upon housekeeper called Becky (Juliet Cowan). A trendy young director in a beanie hat called Sam (Laurie Kynaston) arrives at the start of the film to make a documentary about Lady Isabella's life, various capers follow. It's *The Office*, but posh.

When a film like *Lady* comes out, there's often chuntering from poshos about minute inaccuracies. "Too many leaves on that tree," a member of my family once muttered while watching a hunting scene, since foxhunting was traditionally a winter pursuit. *Downton Abbey* copped it for having yellow labradors in the prewar period, when they weren't as ubiquitous as they are now, as did *The Shooting Party*.

In *The Crown* Jonathan Pryce as Prince Philip held his knife the wrong way ("holds knife like pen"), causing genuine horror in big houses up and down the country. Posh people are sticklers for detail, you see. For heaven's sake, make sure your actors are drinking out of the correct wine glasses.

So *Lady*, the debut feature film by Samuel Abrahams, was bound to have screwed up something, I presumed. Dodgy shoes? The wrong colour rhododendrons? Would someone refer to the "living room"? Nope, none of that. If I were being really picky, I might point out that no toff I know would choose pink champagne over the yellow stuff, and Isabella seems to knock back bottles and bottles of fizzy rosé, or "sparkle darkle", as she calls it. But apart from that, faultless.

The house is impeccable, stuffed with dead animals, marble busts and ikat lampshades. The gardens are perfect — ornamental pond, a lake, the occasional haunting cry of a peacock. "Hang on a sec, I've been to that house!" I realised, a few moments in. It's called Somerleyton Hall, and in real life it's in Suffolk, not Norfolk.

When I visited a few years ago there were two vast, taxidermied polar bears in the entrance hall (still in place for the film). When I expressed surprise at the sight, the house's custodian, Lord Somerleyton, told me that an ancestor of his, the first Lord Somerleyton, had shot 57 polar bears during an Arctic expedition in 1897. Bad form to have all 57 on display, though, so they only had these two for show.

It's the perfect place for a spoofy, contemporary film about the nobility, because Somerleyton and his wife took over the family estate just over 20 years ago, when they were both relatively young, and set about tarting it up in the way that you often find in big houses now when the yoof take over from their parents. Let's call it heirloom-maxxing.

This approach combines old pieces of furniture and art — mahogany dining tables, four-poster beds, dead rellies in gilt frames — with more contemporary flashes. Hot pink, Indian block print wallpapers; yellow sofas; a new Aga in the kitchen, with powder blue kitchen cupboards and a whopping island covered in a very chic, House and Garden-approved marble.

Isabella, self-styled "as the aristocracy's answer to the Kardashians", drifts about the house in much the same way, pairing the old (tweed suits, pie crust collars) with the new (bovver boots and fashionable hair scrunchies). One foot in the 18th century, the other — just about — in 2026.

The script is also faultless. "Where do you stand on ice buckets?" she interrogates the director seconds after he arrives, having forced an unwanted bloody mary on him. "We're a bit torn in this house. A bit naff. A bit Surrey. You're not from Surrey, are you?" A few minutes later, showing Sam his bedroom and bathroom, Isabella waves an old book in the air. "Churchill's best speeches, if you're having a particularly patriotic poo." The acting is so convincing it's almost too painful to watch, and she drawls as if she's high, or pissed, or perhaps both. Give Clifford all the awards.

Without giving any spoilers, we're slowly drawn into her peculiar orbit and learn the reasons for her madness. Because yes, Isabella is tonto, airily telling the director not to make a fuss when they're eating dinner and he chokes on a muntjac tooth, and boasting that she was crowned the face of Royal Ascot, "not once, but twice".

She's also sad and lonely, abandoned and bored in a house with 26 bedrooms. A tragic figure who deserves sympathy rather than derision. Because of the themes — posh house, awful posh people — *Lady* has already drawn comparisons to *Saltburn*, but it feels more *Grey Gardens*, Isabella quite as dotty as Jackie Onassis's reclusive relatives in the cult 1975 documentary.

Because here's the thing when it comes to the upper classes: yes, it's very fashionable to hate them. Boooo, hisssss, terrible, baby-eating nobs. Such privilege, such entitlement! And yet, as *Lady* shows, their lives aren't exactly a picnic. They potter about these big houses, with children at boarding school and very little to do all day, so no wonder they form peculiarly close relationships with their dogs and start drinking early. Isabella is barely seen without a drink. Or a bottle of mushroom oil, very à la mode at grand dinner parties right now.

And I know you may not be able to pay your energy bill, but they can't either. That's why so many of them have to let their gardens out for weddings or festivals — like the Earl and Countess of Sandwich in Dorset, and Anselm Guise with his house, Elmore Court, in Gloucestershire — or start tablescaping businesses, or allow film companies to come in and trample all over the furniture. If you recognise Somerleyton Hall that may be because it stood in for Sandringham in *The Crown* and Stephen Poliakoff's *The Lost Prince*.

Violins, please! Because imagine the pressure of inheriting a 26-bedroom house and half a county. Imagine the pressure of producing an heir so the title can be passed down. Some years ago I interviewed the owner of Knebworth, Henry Lytton Cobbold, and asked how

Laurie Kynaston, Sian Clifford and the director Samuel Abrahams

booze — the life of a modern toff

Far left: Sian Clifford as Lady Isabella Ravenhyde. Above: with Laurie Kynaston in the film. Left: one of Somerleyton Hall's stuffed polar bears. Below: the real Lady Somerleyton

long it would be before he tossed the keys to his son.

"Nine years, five months, three weeks and two days," came the weary answer, there or thereabouts, because the Lytton Cobbold family have a deal that whoever inherits the gothic pile has to do it for only 20 years before passing it to the next generation. It's too much pressure, otherwise. Too much of a life eaten away by a house. Henry had already raised a few million quid to look after his family home but told me he needed another £5 million simply to keep the roof from falling down. "Pass the castle", we headlined the subsequent interview. Poor, poor posh people.

So you really should have some sympathy. It's not an easy existence. And I often think it's funny that so many deride their eccentricities these days, while remaining fascinated by them.

Yes, it's very fashionable to hate the upper classes, but their lives aren't exactly a picnic

One of the most fêted dramas of recent years was Sarah Phelps's brilliant *A Very English Scandal*, about the shocking relationship and subsequent divorce of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll. Earlier this year Callum Scott Howells won praise for his portrayal of the 5th Marquess of Anglesey in *Madfabulous*, about the Victorian toff who had one of his cars converted so it spat perfumed exhaust fumes and had a whole pack of poodles dyed lilac, before dying "pathetically alone" (as one obituary put it) in Monte Carlo aged just 29.

Now there's *Lady*, the latest aristo porn. Worth seeing because it's brilliant, there's not a single mistake when it comes to dogs or knives and forks — and because it accurately sums up the aristocracy's desperate plight.

***Lady* is in cinemas**

Pass the port! Five top screen poshos

Lady Baddingham

Rivals (2024-)
Every character in the hit Disney adaptation of Jilly Cooper is perfect, imho, but perhaps Monica, "Mon-Mon", *right*, is the most perfect of all. She's a stalwart country wife who'd rather sleep with the labradors than her husband, deals with emotional difficulties by going for a walk, likes opera and is genuinely thrilled when her husband gives her two peacocks as a present. But underneath the brisk, uptight surface, as seen in the most recent episode, lurks great passion. A brilliant and moving performance from Claire Rushbrook.

Lady Caroline Collingwood

Succession (2018-23)
Who better to play a chilly, stiff English matriarch than Harriet Walter, *right with Sarah Snook*? The media tycoon Logan Roy (Brian Cox) gets most of the blame for his four children turning out to be such unique headcases, but Lady Caroline certainly did her bit. "Truth is, I should probably never have had children. I should've had dogs," she tells her daughter, Shiv (Sarah Snook). And when poor, emotionally stunted Kendall (Jeremy Strong) tries to talk to his mother about his problems, Caroline suggests they do it in the morning, "over an egg". He subsequently wakes to find she's already gone out. Brutal.

Lord Melbury

Fawlty Towers (1975)
It's not a huge role in the canon of posh TV and film performances, but the confidence trickster in the pilot episode of *Fawlty Towers* (fittingly called *A Touch of Class*) plays a crucial role in setting up the premise of the entire show. He allows us to understand Basil Fawlty's preoccupation with class and raising the tone of his hotel. ("I mean, have you seen the people in room six? They've never even sat on chairs before!") He also nicely sets up Basil's combative relationship with Sybil. Michael Gwynn plays Lord Melbury, who checks a suitcase of "valuables" (actually bricks) into the hotel safe while Sybil pesters her husband to hang a picture.

Fiona

Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994)
"I was a lesbian once at school," Fiona muses, during the film's second wedding, "but only for about 15 minutes. I don't think it counts." Kristin Scott Thomas plays the eternal single woman who bitches cynically from the wedding sidelines, waiting for Charles (Hugh Grant) to declare that he loves her. Alas, that moment never comes, but we root for her all the same because we know her snark is a suit of armour.

Lord Merlin

The Pursuit of Love (2021) Nancy Mitford almost certainly based this character on her friend Lord Berners, an eccentric toff who had his doves dyed rainbow colours and once invited a horse for tea. He was splendidly brought to life by Andrew Scott in the excellent three-part BBC adaptation of the book, also starring Lily James as Linda Radlett. "Love is for grown-ups, as you'll discover one day," he hisses across the table after she becomes engaged to a man he considers a bore. When he later goes to find her in Paris, he insists on wearing sunglasses everywhere. "I've got such kind eyes, you see. Beggars cluster round and annoy me." Stick it on immediately if you missed it first time.

And two howlers...

Earl of Grantham, Downton Abbey (2010-)
Not only for the accidental inclusion of the yellow labradors, but also, in Hugh Bonneville's portrayal, *left*, for being too cuddly and pally to be convincing. A true Edwardian aristocrat would have howled at the staff, ignored his children and kept several mistresses, although admittedly that might have made it less palatable primetime viewing.

Princess Diana, Spencer (2021)
"Now leave me, I want to masturbate," Diana tells her dresser, implausibly, dismissing her from her bedroom. Kristen Stewart plays a haunted princess during Christmas at Sandringham in 1991. Directed by the Chilean Pablo Larraín, the film earned Stewart her first Oscar nomination, but plenty found it downright bizarre. Emma Corrin did it better in *The Crown*.

Sophia Money-Coutts

television

‘I was so scared on Trainspotting, I’d hide in the toilets’

At 50, Kelly Macdonald found she kept being cast as ‘grieving mothers’. So now she’s playing a sheriff instead. By Ed Potton

Kelly Macdonald was a 19-year-old barmaid when she auditioned for her first acting role as Diane in *Trainspotting*. She had moved out of her childhood home in Glasgow and money was tight. Auditionees had to bring a passport photo of themselves and “I remember really struggling, standing at the machine because I couldn’t afford it”, Macdonald says. “I thought, if I do this I literally can’t buy my dinner.” She laughs. “It was very Victorian.”

Like a Clydeside Jane Eyre, she rose to the challenge. “It was a lot for me to go along for that audition,” she says. “It took a lot of guts that I didn’t really have, but there was a little voice in my head saying if I don’t put the pound coin in the slot for the photos, I’ll regret it for ever.”

The little voice was right. Macdonald went to the audition and Danny Boyle, the director of *Trainspotting*, said that as soon as he saw her he knew she could be Diane. Her blend of unpretentiousness and precocity was perfect for the 15-year-old schoolgirl who seduces Ewan McGregor’s character, Renton. She was cast, the film became one of the defining pop-cultural moments of the Nineties, and a grinning Macdonald appeared alongside McGregor, Robert Carlyle et al on the poster that adorned a million student bedrooms.

That was 30 years ago this year, in which time Macdonald has quietly built one of the most impressive careers in the business. Grounded, watchful and intuitive, she has played significant roles for Robert Altman in *Gosford Park*, Martin Scorsese in *Boardwalk Empire* and the Coen brothers in *No Country for Old Men*. There have been characters as varied as the Highland princess in Pixar’s *Brave*, Peter Pan in *Finding Neverland* and the source of romantic obsession for Bill Nighy’s civil servant in *The Girl in the Café*, for which she won an Emmy.

That’s not bad for someone who didn’t go to drama school or university and has never had a career plan. “You can’t plan anything — it’s like trying to plan a birth,” Macdonald says. She has two sons, Freddie, 17, and Theodore, 12, with her ex-husband Dougie Payne, the bass player with the rock band Travis. “All you can do is turn down things that are too similar. After *Trainspotting* I was getting sent a lot of similar parts.” Lots of lairy schoolgirls? “Yeah.”

Now, after playing grieving mothers in the 2019 series *The Victim* and Sky’s starry forthcoming legal drama *War* (she appears in the second series), she is being offered grieving mothers all the time, “which is a bit dull. I’m a bit sick of grieving. In your life, how many times do you have emotional outbursts of grief? I’ve done it so many times, just for work, and you do feel it can’t be good for you.”

Her new role is satisfyingly unteary. She is starring in *Lanterns*, an eight-part series set in the DC Universe about crimefighters called Green Lanterns who have superpowers endowed by magical rings. Thankfully the comic-book flim-flam is dialled down and the emphasis is on the excellent cast. Kyle Chandler (*Friday Night Lights*) stars as Hal Jordan, a cynical middle-aged Lantern; Aaron Pierre (*The Underground Railroad*) is John Stewart, a stoic Lantern-in-training; and Macdonald plays Sheriff Kerry, who is from a small town in Nebraska where alien nefariousness is afoot.

“I really love playing detectives,” she says, sitting in her kitchen in Glasgow. “For a long time I was cast in quite quiet, mousy parts, but the detectives I play generally are quite moody and bossy.” Think of her DCI Joanne Davidson in *Line of Duty*, or her DC Sarah Weitzmann in the excellent Anglo-Japanese series *Giri/Haji*.

Being bolshie is “much more fun. I’m not very bolshie in my own life. Well, you’ll have to talk to my family about that.” She loved Chandler’s portrayal of the rumpled Jordan. “It looks like he’s just been sleeping in someone’s garden and he stumbles on to set and it’s just really fun. That’s exactly what it should feel like. Even in the very dark-themed films or TV that I’ve done, it shouldn’t be like pulling teeth.”

Right, from top: Kelly Macdonald with Ewan McGregor in Trainspotting; in Lanterns; with Vicky McClure in Line of Duty. Below left: with her former husband, Dougie Payne

‘My dad was a troubled person. He became a born again and it got a bit out of control’

All that fun, perhaps, is a reason why Macdonald, 50, looks as though she has barely aged since the *Trainspotting* days. “I should get some sort of beauty campaign,” she jokes. “Skin moisturiser. People say it less than they used to, which is the other end of it — when people stop saying it.”

She says it’s “really scary” that three decades have passed since *Trainspotting*. She remembers being intimidated by her co-stars, who also included Jonny Lee Miller and Ewen Bremner. “They were all much more worldly than me. I was quite a young sort of 19-year-old. They knew what they wanted to do and I had no real idea. I was a bit scared to sit and chat with them all. The ADs [assistant directors] would come and get me when it was time to go to set and I was hiding in the toilets.”

Even worse was *Gosford Park*, Altman’s country house mystery, which starred Maggie Smith, Michael Gambon and Helen Mirren. “It was a bit like a celebrity campsite,” she says. “There were so many trailers.” Macdonald was the lady’s maid to a countess, played by Smith. “She was absolutely hilarious and could be quite cutting, but she liked me. She had this Scottish ancestry and so she felt easy with me. I was very fortunate to be hanging on her coattails.”

Macdonald kept her Scottish accent for *Gosford Park* but she does a mean American one in *Lanterns* and *No Country for Old Men* and a decent Irish brogue in *Boardwalk Empire*, in which she plays Margaret Thompson, the immigrant wife of Steve Buscemi’s crime boss. Moving to New York for the five series, Macdonald loved the show, except for one series, which “I hated because Margaret became really religious.

“I could barely learn my lines whenever she had to quote the Bible,” she says, hesitating. “I’ve got a... it’s not a phobia, but anything to do with religion makes me feel very uncomfortable.” That’s connected to her late father, who split from her mother when Macdonald was nine. “My dad was a troubled person,” she says. “He became a born again and it just got a bit out of control.”

She was brought up on the outskirts of Glasgow by her mother, a sales executive

DAVID LEVENE/GUARDIAN/EYEVINE

Kelly Macdonald

in the clothing industry. After her acting career took off Macdonald lived for several years in London, but she's back in Glasgow now and loves it. Not being in London means she doesn't "have relatives come to stay with me all the time", although commuting to the capital requires her to be "up and down like a Celtic yo-yo". She and Payne divorced in 2017 — does she have a partner? "I'm going to say bugger off, but I don't mean it in a horrible way."

Growing up she always dreamt of the wide open spaces of America. "I've got a real thing about Americana, an inner cowgirl or something," she says. "I've got far too many cowboy boots." One pair, bought while shooting *No Country for Old Men* in New Mexico, looked great there but ridiculous at home. "They've got all these glinty little crystals and they're very colourful. It's like wearing Christmas trees on your legs."

Next up she has *Dennis*, a film directed by her friend Emily Mortimer, with whom she starred in *Elizabeth* in 1998. It's based on an episode in the life of Mortimer, who spent a year in Russia for her degree at Oxford. "She fell in love with a Russian poet and brought him back. It's just a lovely love story," Macdonald says. "I play a version of her mum, Penny [the second wife of Mortimer's father, the barrister and writer John Mortimer]."

Macdonald knows the family well. "I've gone on holiday with them so it was a bit daunting." The casting is great: Yura Borisov, who was the loveable kidnapper in *Anora*, plays the poet, and Alison Oliver, the submissive Isabella in *Wuthering Heights*, plays the Mortimer proxy.

Oliver looks a bit like Mortimer, I say. "She really sounded like her as well and she picked up her mannerisms. You could tell that she was a little bit infatuated, like we all are with Emily."

Similarly, for 30 years directors, co-stars and audiences have all been a little bit infatuated with Kelly Macdonald. Just don't ask her to play another grieving mother.

***Lanterns* is on HBO Max from Mon, with weekly episodes**

my culture fix

Fiona Bruce

The TV presenter likes the Smiths and would invite Pamela Anderson to dinner

My favourite author

Elizabeth Strout, particularly her latest book, *The Things We Never Say* [which has been longlisted for the Booker prize]. I like books where not much happens. But hers are an acute observation of the minutiae of people's lives and how what can seem the smallest thing can have the most profound and devastating impact.

The book I'm reading

Damascus Station by David McCloskey. I read about one thriller a year. They don't generally do it for me: characterisation is all for me and thrillers don't have very much of that. This is about Iraq and I have to say I'm enjoying it enormously.

The book I wish I had written

Romantic Comedy by Curtis Sittenfeld. She is just amazing.

The book I couldn't finish

Wolf Hall. I just couldn't get myself interested in it. I love history [but] I can't put my finger on it: I just didn't care.

The book I'm ashamed I haven't read

Middlemarch. I think I would probably love it.

My favourite film

Atonement. It's incredibly romantic. How they didn't win an Oscar for cinematography I do not know. And Keira Knightley and James McAvoy have never been better.

My favourite play

Like with books, the one I saw most recently: *The Truth* in the West End with Stephen Mangan. It's a French farce translated into English and it's hilarious.

The TV series I'm watching

I've just finished *Legends*, I loved it. I enjoy watching *Amandaland* and I have started *Dutton Ranch* because I really enjoyed *Yellowstone*. But then I love horses so that would figure.

My favourite TV series

Ab Fab (*with Joanna Lumley, below*). It was just so groundbreaking at the time. Those characters were so over the top. And laugh-out-loud hilarious.

My favourite piece of music

Life on Mars? [by David Bowie]. A few years back I went on the Chris Evans Radio 2 breakfast show. Rick Wakeman was on and he played it for me. I recorded it on my phone and it was my ringtone.

The lyric I wish I'd written

"There's a club if you'd like to go/ You could meet somebody who really loves you/ So you go and you stand on your own/ And you leave on your own/ And you go home and you cry/ And you want to die" from *How Soon Is Now* by the Smiths, *below*. This is not a reflection of my life, but it always counterintuitively makes me smile.

The instrument I played

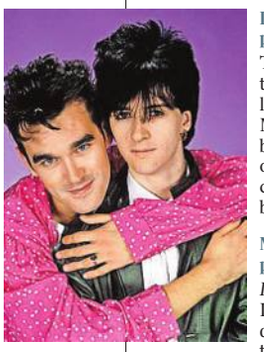
Piano. I learnt when I was 14 and had a massive crush on my piano teacher, Mr Wise. He was so handsome. So I learnt really fast. I got to grade five or six in a year because I was practising like crazy to impress him.

The instrument I wish I'd learnt

Guitar. There's something so cool about picking one up and strumming a few chords.

The music that cheers me up

Sister Sledge.



If I could own one painting it would be

The Sistine Chapel, but that would probably be a little bit much to ask for. More realistically, this beautiful painting we had on *Fake or Fortune?* called *The Bean Harvest* by Helen McNicoll.

My guiltiest cultural pleasure

Interior Design Masters. I watch it with my daughter. We celebrate the ones that come out with brilliant things and are aghast at the ones that come out with absolute shockers. Alan Carr is brilliant.

I'm having a fantasy dinner party. I'll invite these artists and authors

I like men, obviously. I'm married to one and I have a son. But I really enjoy the company of women. So I would invite Artemisia Gentileschi, Tracey Emin, Pamela Anderson, Curtis Sittenfeld and Emmeline Pankhurst.

And I'll put on this music

My best friend Lou's playlist.

The performance that I'm looking forward to

Birmingham Royal Ballet is putting on *Swan Lake*. I'm a real ballet fan and it always makes me cry.

I wasted an evening watching

Breaking Bad. It must be brilliant because everyone I know says it's brilliant. I tried twice. I couldn't get into it.

The film I walked out of

The Exorcist when I was 16. I was with my boyfriend James and we had to clamber over all these people to get out. I cannot do scary movies.

***Fake or Fortune?* is on BBCI and iPlayer**

visual art

Britain's Bayeux Tapestry — almost as good as the real thing

Can't see the original just yet? Reading Museum's Victorian replica is remarkable. By Laura Freeman

The ladies of Leek have been much maligned. If anyone knows anything about the replica Bayeux Tapestry made by the good women of the Leek Embroidery Society in the 1880s, they know that these fainting Victorian maidens stitched little pants over a naked figure in the margins and removed or, ahem, diminished the naughty bits of some of the more exposed men and horses.

They did, it's true, but only because the images they had been given to work from had already been tidied up by the almost certainly male technicians of a photography studio.

I set off to Reading Museum, home of the replica Bayeux Tapestry since 1895, intending to tell you that here was something to tide you over if you missed out on the British Museum's first wave of Bayeux Tapestry tickets. (Fret not, more will be released). But the Reading replica is more than a postscript. It is a remarkable piece of history and a wonderful work of craft in its own right.

Elizabeth Wardle, mistressmind of the tapestry project, was one of those redoubtable Victorian women who Got Things Done. She was born in Leek in Staffordshire in 1834, the daughter of a druggist who was involved in the dyeing side of the local textile industry. She married Thomas Wardle (not closely related), whose father had a dyeworks and the couple had fourteen children, five of whom died young. After the birth of her last child in 1877, Elizabeth had two years of invalid convalescence. And no wonder.

In 1885 the Wardles made a trip to France, where they saw the original tapestry at Bayeux. The couple were friends with William Morris and took a keen interest in the Arts and Crafts movement. They shared Morris's mission to revive ancient craft skills and champion the use of natural dyes and materials. Elizabeth, who had founded the Leek Embroidery Society in 1879, was determined that her ladies should stitch a full-size replica "so that England should have a copy of its own".

It was, after all, an English work of art. The Bayeux Tapestry is misnamed twice over. It is not a tapestry but an embroidery. Our calling it a "tapestry" seems to have come from the French *tapisserie*, referring to textile wall-hangings in general. While the original tapestry may have ended up in Bayeux, it was almost certainly stitched by English needlewomen, probably in a convent at Canterbury. The Canterbury Embroidery, then.

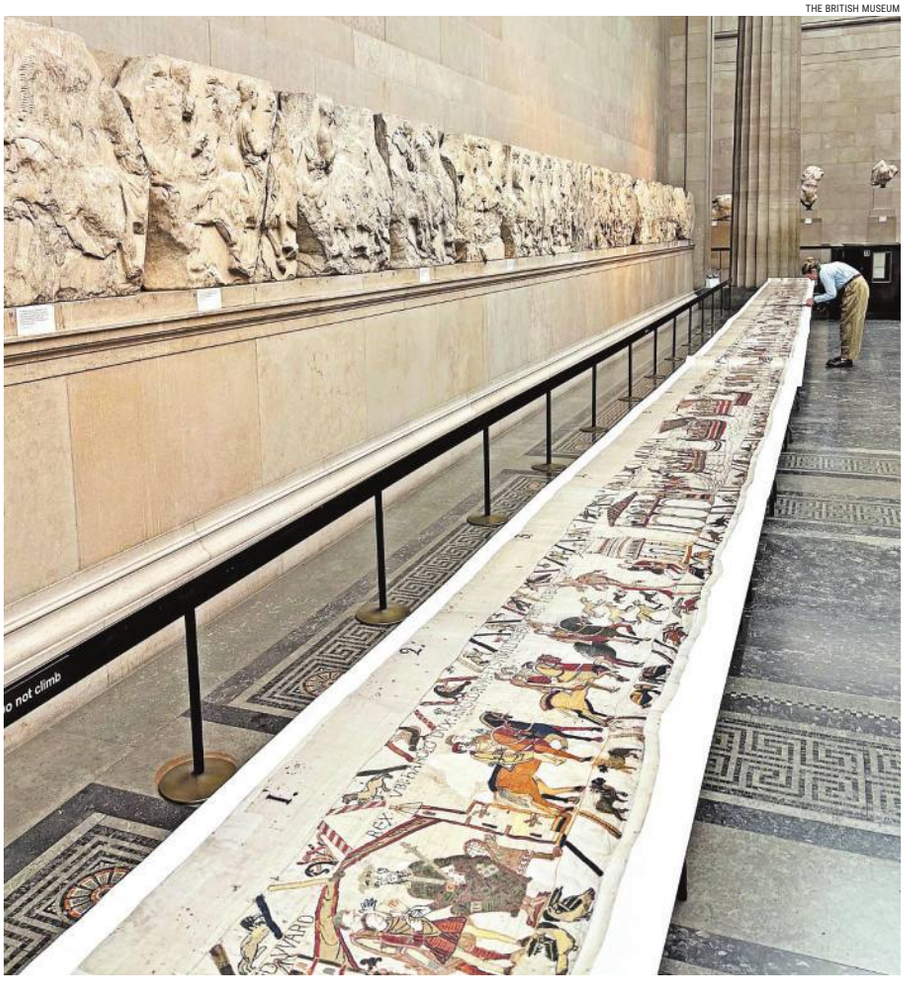
At the time that Wardle's ladies were threading their needles, it was popularly believed that Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, and the ladies of her court had stitched the tapestry soon after the Norman Conquest of 1066. It was seen as both a superb piece of royal propaganda legitimising William's right to the English throne and an act of matrimonial devotion. To Victorians, taken with the notion of the ideal wife as "the Angel in the House", devoted to her children and adoring of her husband, the Matilda story was appealing. It was also a time of huge interest in the medieval past: the age of Tennyson and the pre-Raphaelites.

Modern scholarship is not convinced by Matilda. The Canterbury theory seems more likely — the needlewomen were skilled in a style of embroidery that was known as "English work" or *opus Anglicanum*. The Bayeux Tapestry is unusual in being so unglitzy. If you saw the V&A's great *Opus Anglicanum* exhibition in 2016 you will remember the lustre of it all: the threads of gold and silver, the shimmering copes and glittering vestments.

The original Bayeux Tapestry is made of sterner stuff. The nine panels of its base are linen woven from flax. The threads are wool, coloured with natural dyes in a limited, but expressively used, palette. There are two shades of red, three blues (the darkest almost black), three greens, a mustardy yellow and a soft brown. The colours were obtained from madder and weld (both plants) and indigo (probably from woad, also a plant). The original needles were probably made from bone, antler or possibly a copper alloy.

The Leek ladies set out to be as faithful to the original as was reasonably possible after eight centuries. Each of the 35 embroiderers stitched her name under her portion. Wardle took the first scene of Edward the Confessor on the throne. It is rather moving tracing their stitched signatures. One senses their pride in their work alongside perhaps a touch of boundary-marking. One wouldn't want another woman's less than perfect stitches mistaken for one's own.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM



A practice run for the arrival of the Bayeux Tapestry at the British Museum. Below: a detail showing the Battle of Hastings from the replica in Reading

It took the ladies of Leek 18 months to stitch their replica. They recreated all 626 figures

You find yourself thinking also of the unnamed, unknown creators of the original tapestry, working until the daylight faded, stitching scenes of battle in the quiet of a Canterbury close, following the outlines of words they could not perhaps understand. The original designs and Latin inscriptions were probably worked out by a monk more usually employed in a scriptorium illuminating manuscripts. The borders at the top and bottom of the Bayeux Tapestry, with their animals, chimeras and grotesques, owe much to the marginalia at the edges of medieval manuscript pages.

It took the ladies of Leek 18 months to stitch their replica of the nearly 70m original. They recreated all 626 figures — only three of whom are women — 190 horses, 35 dogs, 506 other birds and animals, 33 buildings, 37 ships, 37 trees, 57 Latin inscriptions and Halley's soaring comet. They used stem stitches for the outlines and laid stitches for areas of colour.

They worked from a series of black-and-white engravings (leading to some slippages in colour) based on photographs taken by the South Kensington Museum, now the V&A, in 1873. It was an undertaking that took two months and more than 180 glass plates. If I were the V&A, I'd jump on the Bayeux bandwagon and put the whole lot on display when the British Museum's exhibition opens on September 10.

The photographs were the same size as the tapestry and hand-coloured. In the colouring-in, anything that dangled was made to dangle less. There are 93 penises in the Bayeux Tapestry — 88 equine and five human.

On completion the replica tapestry went on display in Leek. Admission was one shilling. A little over 1,200 people saw the tapestry before it went on tour. The replica went to Tewkesbury, Newcastle, Stoke, Worcester, Chester, the United States and Germany. It was summoned to Windsor by Queen Victoria. In 1895 a civic-minded alderman, Arthur Hill, bought the replica for Reading, where it has more or less remained ever since. There was a tour to South Africa in 1931 and an anniversary excursion to Battle Abbey in 1966.

Wardle was much inspired by a book about the tapestry written by the Rev John Collingwood Bruce in 1856. His introduction was stirringly romantic and must have spurred on the stitchers when their fingers and eyes grew tired. "The pen of the writer of romance is not the only implement which confers immortality upon man," he wrote. "The chisel of the sculptor, the pencil of the painter, and the needle of the high-born dame, can confer a lasting renown upon those whose deeds are worthy of being remembered. The work which we are about to consider was effected by the simplest of these implements — the needle."

Britain's Bayeux Tapestry is on display at Reading Museum. The Bayeux Tapestry at the British Museum, London, opens on Sep 10

music

It's Graceland — for a new generation

Folk band Stornoway and Ladysmith Black Mambazo tell Mark Beaumont about their new collaboration

JOHN BULLOCK

Stornoway's Brian Briggs, Jon Ouin and Oli Steadman. Above: Ladysmith Black Mambazo performing Graceland at the Proms this month

In the shade of a tropical garden east of Durban, South Africa, Brian Briggs, a mild-mannered nature ranger, ornithologist and the lead singer of Stornoway, watches the members of Ladysmith Black Mambazo take to an ornate gazebo to sashay and high-kick their way through a song he wrote only imagining they might sing it. He quietly shakes his head. "I can't believe this is happening," he tells me.

Mambazo, the mbube choir made world-famous by Paul Simon's *Graceland* album 40 years ago, had history with Stornoway — without realising it. They had already performed their own Zulu version of a Stornoway song called *Josephine*, a stunning folk harmony piece from the Oxford "postfolk" band's 2015 album *Bonxie* and easily one of the greatest British folk songs.

The choir, though, thought this sublime tune was an age-old traditional. "It sounded as if it was written a long time ago," Mambazo's bandleader Sibongiseni Shabalala says, "like the writers of the song are old people that are no longer singing, or just gone."

So when the Stornoway bassist Oli Steadman got in touch to say that footage of their performance had reached the band and to suggest they fly to Durban to re-record the song together, alongside the single *The Honeyeater's Song*, for their forthcoming fifth album, *Beyonder*, it was seance-worthy stuff.

"They thought they'd been rung up by a bunch of ghosts with a centuries-old shanty," Steadman says over a glass of local wine in a hotel bar. Shabalala laughs. "They heard the song? They're still alive?"

In a sense Stornoway are indeed back from the dead. Having earned a strong cult following over three albums, they bowed out in 2017, partly, according to their quip-prone keyboardist, Jon Ouin, because "we all hated each other", partly because being a successful mid-level band with greater ambitions had become financially unviable.

For five years Briggs returned to his other life as a nature warden on a Welsh wetlands reserve, until the call of his own song began drowning out those of the birds he was nurturing. "It was the rediscovery of songwriting," he explains of his return to a Stornoway mindset. "I feel like I'm a pretty decent nature reserve warden, but I feel like this is the thing I do best. It's like a rediscovery of a calling."

The reception to their 2022 reunion was overwhelming. Comeback gigs sold out in seconds ("We were all, like, 'the website's obviously broken'," Steadman says with a chuckle). A fourth album, *Dig the Mountain!* , followed in 2023 and in March this year they played a phenomenal Royal Albert Hall show, hiding an entire choir in the audience for *Josephine* and using a 360-degree sound system to bring the sounds of the outside inside.

"We wanted to immerse people in nature and take them on a journey," Briggs says. "We had woodlands, we had mountains, we could make birds fly around the hall, calling. We had a train driving up to a platform by the stage and we drained the entire Atlantic Ocean out of the hall through a plughole in the middle." He beams at the memory. "It was the highlight of my life."

What Steadman calls this "constant sense of being sent on some adventure" is at the heart of *Beyonder*. With sublime melodies swathed in Spectoresque orchestration and choral bombast, it's their biggest and boldest album to date, and their most lyrically intrepid.

Namechecking a host of famous explorers, the album's first single, *Marco Polo*, likens learning about a new lover to discovering undiscovered continents; *Skydiver* equates falling in love with jumping from a plane hoping you'll be caught. The lush, oceanic *Mariana* sinks into the colour and romance of Deepsea Challenger's 2012 descent into the Pacific, while *Spirit Walker* employs tribal transformation myths to tell the fantastical story of Briggs running away from the band to the Hebridean island of St Kilda, only to turn into one of its seabirds, free on the wind.

It was in their escapist mindset, then — and their blood, as Steadman was born in South Africa — to chase Ladysmith Black Mambazo's version of *Josephine* all the way to Durban, heading straight to Golden Mile beach on arrival to plunge into Steadman's ancestral waters.

"You get families coming in from the mountainous parts of the country who don't see the ocean often, but to them it's very sacred in their culture," he says. "They've come especially to gather seawater into bottles, drink it and be sick. It's the deliberate purging of spirits."

They were disconcerted, though, by the beach signs discouraging animal sacrifice. "It's a picture of a chicken with a red line through it," Steadman explains. "Don't slaughter chickens."

For Steadman, the trip is a chance to reconnect with his roots, ten years after his last visit. When his father moved the family to Oxford when Steadman was 15, it was intended only as a 12-month visit. "I didn't really say goodbye," he says, "so I've always felt a really strong pull back, a homelessness."

On subsequent visits he would immerse himself in the local Maskandi music, which later found its way into Stornoway songs such as *Bag in the Wind*. This time he takes me to the North Beach casino his grandmother frequented, bagging a minor jackpot on his first tap of a slot machine.

'I didn't really say goodbye to South Africa so I've always felt a strong pull back'

Meanwhile his bandmates are holed up in the ramshackle United Rhythms recording studio, its dusty halls lined with African art and Maskandi artist posters. They have already recorded three new songs in a day with local musicians before the choir turns up.

Founded by the late Joseph Shabalala in the Sixties, Ladysmith Black Mambazo have survived apartheid and several murders to become a generation-spanning symbol of peace and unity in South African music, regenerating from Joseph's descendants as members have died or retired.

"It's an institution, a country," Sibongiseni — Joseph's son — says. "Our father always told us, whatever you do, make sure that you represent the culture and your people and your country in the right way." He recalls another key lesson from Joseph, a guru-like figure for the group. "Do not expect the music to feed you. You must do it for the love."

To hear them rise in unison around you into a chorus of *Josephine* is a rare wonder indeed, and their bond with Stornoway is palpable. Stornoway's songs have always had a nature-loving leaning, but *The Honeyeater's Song* frames the plight of an endangered Australasian bird — forgetting its mating song due to climate-driven habitat loss — within the band's most urgent ecological message yet. "Fire, fire, the house is aflame," they warn.

"Those alarm bells are ringing louder and louder every day," Briggs says at the start of a baking summer. As wildfires sweep France and Spain, lyrics such as "we'd love to stop burning but we don't like change" are prescient. "This is what it takes, people directly being affected," he says. "That's when it becomes impossible to ignore. It is going to come down to when it is on people's doorsteps."

Certainly Mambazo connected instantly with *The Honeyeater's Song*. "In our father's time, they grew up ploughing, herding goats, herding cows," Shabalala says. "For that to survive you must know what things you are not supposed to do to the earth. You might do something bad to the grass and then your cow eats that grass and comes back and feeds you with its milk, so you are actually killing yourself."

Although they continue to perform *Graceland* tracks such as *Homeless* live — this month they played a Prom marking the 40th anniversary of the album — none of the present Mambazo members sang on the album. At a time of global rather than national crisis, then, they consider their Stornoway collaboration this generation's *Graceland*.

"This is one of the projects that we hope is going to continue the dream of our father, to spread this kind of music," Shabalala says. "Now the music is spread, we just need to keep it alive. Put it back in people's hearts."

***The Honeyeater's Song* is out now; *Beyonder* is released on Sep 25. The BBC Proms celebration of *Graceland* is on BBC2/iPlayer from today, 7.30pm, and available on Radio3/BBC Sounds**

books

© ESTATE OF DAVID HOCKNEY; PHOTO: RICHARD SCHMIDT

Meet Hockney's real housewife of Beverly Hills

Book of the week

Betty Freeman was a wealthy art collector who swept the young artist up into 1960s Los Angeles glamour. By Laura Freeman

The title was Betty Freeman's idea. "There's only one thing you should call this painting," the Californian art collector said to the young David Hockney, "since I'm dusting: *Beverly Hills Housewife*." It stuck.

Hockney's portrait of Freeman is the most enigmatic and beguiling of the artist's Sixties California paintings. It hasn't the shy sexiness of *Man in Shower in Beverly Hills* (1964) or *Peter Getting Out of Nick's Pool* (1966), nor the sheer, show-off virtuosity of *The Splash* (1966) or *A Bigger Splash* (1967).

Beverly Hills Housewife (1966-67) flashes no flesh and makes no splash, yet the more you look at this still and immaculate picture, the more puzzling, elusive and teasing it seems. In *The Beverly Hills Housewife: Hockney's Californian Muse and the World Beyond the Pool*, the art historian James Cahill offers both an attentively close reading of the painting and a wider panoramic shot of Hockney's Los Angeles in the Sixties.

Hockney knew the city before his plane touched down. He used to say he had grown up in Bradford and Hollywood. Born in 1937, he had spent his childhood in and out of picture houses such as Bradford's New Victoria and at "fleapit" cinemas with a strung-up sheet for a screen. At the Royal College of Art a fellow student introduced him to California bodybuilder magazines such as *Physique Pictorial* with its photographs of all-American Adonises smiling in the surf. Hockney later told a French journalist: "I was drawn towards California, which I didn't know... because I sensed the place would excite me. No doubt it had a lot to do with sex."

First he went in 1961 to New York, where he made a series of etchings after Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* charting a young provincial's arrival in a big city, his rise and his downfall. Watching television one evening, Hockney saw an advert for Lady Clairol hair dye. "Blondes have more fun. Doors open for a blonde." Hockney went blond.

He returned to New York in December 1963 and flew to Los Angeles in January 1964. "As I flew over San Bernardino and looked down — and saw the swimming pools and the houses and everything and the sun, I was more thrilled than I've ever been arriving at any other city, including New York," he said.

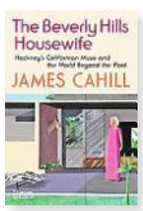
It was a Hick's Progress. Hockney had no idea how to get around — or get a guy — in this sprawling city. Walking from his motel on to the beach at Santa Monica, he saw lights in the distance. He started to walk towards what he took to be the city centre. After two miles the lights became a gas station. The next day Hockney bought a bicycle. He cycled 16 miles to Pershing Square, a promised land of gay nightlife. The park was deserted. He drank a beer and cycled back. Cahill nicely balances art criticism in the high style with the bathos and humour of Hockney's early, endearing mishaps. His first studio apartment was in the converted garage of a run-down house in a particularly seedy part of Los Angeles. The oven was full of cockroaches.

Meanwhile — and here you must imagine the camera panning across the boulevards and freeways at the magic hour of dusk when the Los Angeles sky turns an unreal pink — Freeman, also newly blonde, was admiring the black-velvet covered walls in her music room at No 703 Hillcrest Road.

Freeman (no relation as far as I know) was born Betty June Wishnick in Chicago in 1921. Her grandfather Eli Wishnick had been a horse trader, merchant and part-time rabbi who had emigrated to America from the Kaluga Governorate of the Russian Empire in 1866. He set up a small country store in Illinois and later moved his family to boom-town Chicago.

Betty's father, Robert, the youngest of eight children, worked hard, won a scholarship, studied chemical engineering, then law, before making a fortune founding Witco, one of the biggest chemical and petroleum manufacturing firms of the 20th century. Betty grew up in Brooklyn and attended Wellesley College, where she majored in English literature, minored in musicology and met Stanley Freeman, a graduate in chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Beverly Hills Housewife by David Hockney (1966-67). Above: Hockney in Venice, California, 1964. Left: Betty Freeman, 1975



The Beverly Hills Housewife
Hockney's Californian Muse and the World Beyond the Pool
by James Cahill

Thames & Hudson
£25 pp224

Their marriage, in 1942, was not a success. He liked big game hunting, she liked the avant-garde. He liked hamburgers, she liked Clyfford Still. He played golf, she played piano for seven hours a day. Unlike some of Hockney's other great portraits — *Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy, Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy — Beverly Hills Housewife* is a painting with a missing half. Stanley is represented only by a stuffed antelope head (it was this that Betty had been dusting) and a zebra skin over Betty's Le Corbusier recliner. By the time Hockney came to photograph Betty at Hillcrest Road in 1966, Stanley and Betty were living apart. They divorced in 1971.

Betty, 45, Jewish, Republican, seriously rich, and Hockney, 29, English, northern, working class, became friends for life. She died in January 2009, Hockney earlier this year. A few months after Betty's death, the painting, which she had bought for $4,500, sold at Christie's for $7,922,500.

Beverly Hills Housewife was the "first absolutely specific portrait" Hockney had made since a portrait of his father in 1955. Betty was acerbic, decisive and deadpan. She liked Hockney. "He's a great satiric person... he sees the foible in human life." She didn't like people being told what to do any more than he did. At her parties, she used to put up a sign saying "Here smoking is encouraged". People got Betty wrong. Hockney's friend and dealer John Kasmin recalled others dismissing her as "a dumb broad with money". Not a bit of it.

She was discerning but also daring. She bought works by Roy Lichtenstein, Bruce Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Sam Francis, Henry Moore and the light artist Dan Flavin. In the morning the maid would go round switching on the Flavins.

She was a champion of contemporary classical music and held concerts for up-and-coming composers. She knew her roster wasn't for everyone and called it "after-dinner punishment/entertainment". Once, Hockney persuaded Kasmin to join him for one of Betty's "musicales". "It might be a bit dull, Kas," Hockney warned, "it might be hard work. But we'll stand and make a get-away." Kasmin found himself stuck for four hours as a musician played one note over and over again.

There is something of the standing-at-the-back spirit to Cahill's book. If ever it threatens to get too serious — Clement Greenberg, Philip Glass, at one point he mentions Michel Foucault — on the next page he whisks you off to a gay disco or an art party heavy with marijuana. He sets *Beverly Hills Housewife* in its time, giving you the LA of greasy downtown diners, necking in cars, absurd wealth and the laughable architecture of the homes in the hills. He draws art-historical parallels, illuminating Hockney's interest in the paintings of the Renaissance artists Giotto, Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca and in the deceptive perspective shifts of Jan van Eyck and Diego Velázquez. (He lost me at the end when he introduces the TV series *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. I looked up the leather pants clip on YouTube. Betty would have hated it.)

Cahill's is a clever scheme, carried through with ease and insight. It is serious enough to read at a desk, but also entertaining enough for the holiday poolside, perhaps with a pause between chapters for a cooling diving board splash.

How Hannah Arendt fled the Nazis

The philosopher was arrested as an 'enemy alien' in France before escaping to New York. By Pratinav Anil

Hannah Arendt's appropriation by lesser minds has always made her seem a much less interesting writer than she is. When Donald Trump was elected the first time round, her 1951 masterpiece *The Origins of Totalitarianism* briefly became compulsory luggage among the resistance classes. I remember earnest American coevals at university wandering about clasping Penguin paperbacks as though Arendt had personally drafted an emergency handbook titled *So You've Accidentally Elected Hitler*.

Arendt's book, in fact, was a fairly sophisticated account of how the First World War corroded the habits of trust on which European civil society had rested, how democracy and the dissolution of class hierarchies threw up what she called the "mob", and how the troika of antisemitism, imperialism and racism fused into a single intoxicating creed capable of explaining every grievance and sanctifying every crime. It was a work of historical anatomy, not an inexhaustible source of MSNBC chyrons and BlueSky threads.

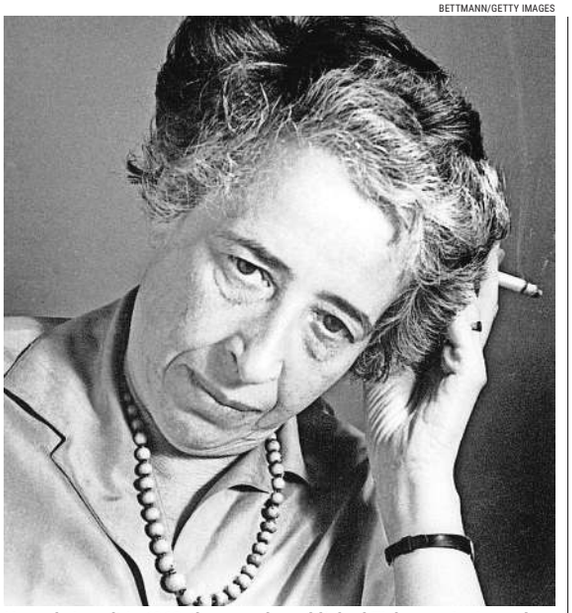
Thomas Meyer is well qualified to rescue Arendt from her latter-day devotees. His 2023 biography now appears in Shelley Frisch's pleasantly idiomatic English translation. Meyer, the editor of a 12-volume German edition of Arendt's writings, has commendably restored Arendt to the vanished worlds that made her — Weimar Germany, interwar Paris and Cold War America.

At the outset Meyer takes the reader on a somewhat overlong march through generations of Arendt's forebears in Königsberg, now the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. But the patience is rewarded. He replaces the familiar legend of Arendt as an implausibly precocious prodigy — "Pallas Athene", her contemporaries called her — with the more persuasive portrait of a woman shaped by the cultivated milieu of the German-Jewish bourgeoisie.

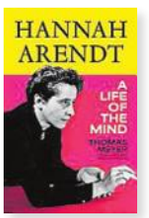
In her teens she worked her way through Soren Kierkegaard and Karl Jaspers, read Greek and Latin, and committed swathes of poetry to memory. She arrived at Marburg University in 1924 aged 17, ready to read philosophy and to move with unusual assurance in professorial circles. Marburg at the time revolved around one man: Martin Heidegger, who had scarcely published anything. Still, that did not stop students crossing Germany to hear the "little magician from Messkirch" lecture.

Meyer devotes almost a fifth of his book to Arendt's entanglement with Heidegger. It was, as he drily puts it, "more than a mere affair". The 35-year-old professor, married and the father of two sons, singled out the striking 17-year-old student and pursued her with a letter of embarrassing ardour: "From now on," he wrote, "you will belong in my life." Before long they were conducting a clandestine liaison in her attic lodgings, alternating between adultery and readings of Augustine.

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES



Hannah Arendt in 1963, the year she published Eichmann in Jerusalem



Hannah Arendt
A Life of the Mind
by Thomas Meyer, trans. Shelley Frisch
William Collins
£26 pp560

Relations with her former lover Heidegger soured after he hastily embraced Hitler

The fling ended when Heidegger abandoned her for a Freiburg chair. In 1933 relations further soured when he hastily embraced Hitler, supplying spurious philosophical justifications for fascism. Heidegger, the protégé of the Jewish phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, enthusiastically oversaw the university's replacement of Jews, acquiescing even in his old mentor's humiliation and dismissal.

Arendt confronted him before disappearing from his life for 17 years. When she returned to Europe in 1950, as director of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, which was tasked with recovering the personal effects looted from murdered Jews, she sought him out once more. They remained on wary but affectionate terms until her death, in large measure because she pitied the fallen philosopher.

On the personal front, Meyer is at his best in Arendt's Parisian exile between 1933 and 1940, the real hinge of the book. Having fled Berlin in the aftermath of the Reichstag fire, after being held for a few days in Gestapo custody, she abandoned philosophy for the Youth Aliyah, the Zionist organisation that spirited Jewish children out of Europe to kibbutzim in Palestine. Arendt organised the emigration of about 120 children.

Her Parisian life was mostly uneventful until May 1940, when she was arrested as an "enemy alien". She spent about a month in Gurs, France's largest internment camp, before escaping amid the confusion of France's collapse. Many of the remaining inmates were deported to Auschwitz. Arendt's escape set her on a hazardous route to Lisbon, where she and her husband, Heinrich Blücher, boarded the Guiné, bound for New York.

Meyer is compelling on Arendt's conjugal life. He does not, however, retell the story of how she met her first husband, Günther Stern, a pupil of Heidegger's, at a Berlin masked ball in 1929, where she appeared dressed as an Arab harem girl. Their marriage, contracted in 1929, dissolved eight years later when Stern found a fresh romantic allegiance in New York, although the two remained on sufficiently cordial terms for him to help to secure the affidavits that enabled Arendt and Blücher to escape Europe.

Blücher proved an equally incorrigible philanderer. Meyer tells us that he was "constantly unfaithful" and "was always asking women if they wanted to sleep with him". In McCarthyite America he cannily lived down his communist revolutionary past and found his métier teaching philosophy at Bard College. Meyer charitably credits him with an "intuitive intelligence" and casts him as Arendt's indispensable sounding board.

Astonishingly, Arendt had arrived in New York in 1941 with almost no English, a handful of rescued books and none of the institutional advantages that usually attend intellectual greatness. Within a decade she had insinuated herself into the émigré circle around Partisan Review, whose anti-Stalinist left supplied precisely the audience for her first masterpiece, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Origins bracketed Hitler with Stalin, giving fresh relevance to a study of Nazism. It was not the first book to perform this elision. Orwell had done so, as had Franz Borkenau and James Burnham. Arendt's achievement lay elsewhere. *Origins* is a lucid book, interested in ideas without subordinating facts to them, as so much textbook Marxism was prone to do.

The sensibility served her well in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, published in 1963. Adolf Eichmann, the SS officer who organised the logistics of deporting Jews to the concentration camps, appeared in Arendt's account as a conscientious functionary of astonishing moral emptiness, distinguished less by fanatical conviction than by an incapacity for thought. Her phrase "the banality of evil" described the ease with which ordinary men could commit extraordinary crimes once they had handed their consciences over to the filing cabinet. More incendiary was Arendt's cool discussion of the Jewish Councils, whose leaders had been compelled to administer Nazi rule in the ghettos. Many readers regarded her writing on this subject as unforgivable victim-blaming.

Meyer is particularly strong on the intellectual currents of interwar German philosophy and the stifling landscape of Cold War conformity in America. Yet he too often prints the archive rather than paraphrasing it.

Readers in search of a sharper, funnier portrait would do well to keep Randall Jarrell's satirical novel *Pictures from an Institution* within arm's reach. His Irene Rosenbaum — a lightly fictionalised Arendt — is "a thin, mocking" presence, grateful to her adopted homeland and yet not uncritical of it. "Yet Irene liked America too: as she said to Constance, parodying a line of poetry that had attracted her, 'In the United States, there one feels free.' But she spoilt it by continuing, 'Except from the Americans — but every pearl has its oyster.'"

books

Are you Team Cartland or Kingsolver? The big autumn reads

From stylish fiction to gossipy memoirs, here's our guide to the buzziest books you won't want to miss

FICTION

Agrippa by Robert Harris
Hutchinson Heinemann £22, Aug 27
"I came into the world feet-first — a dangerous way to arrive," is how *Agrippa* begins. Robert Harris has returned to the world of his Cicero trilogy by telling the story of Agrippa, sidekick to Augustus, a pleb who rose to the top of Roman politics. It's a fascinating study of how power corrupts, a big Harris obsession.

Sophie, Standing There by Meg Mason
Bloomsbury £20, Aug 27
Sorrow and Bliss was one of the most zeitgeisty, talked-about novels in 2021. Meg Mason's new novel is about Sophie, a sweet-natured but ever so lonely woman who becomes interested in an author whose works bring her solace and joy. "A funny, raw and intensely moving exploration of loneliness and finding connection," the blurb promises.

Life of M by Rachel Cusk
Faber £18.99, Aug 27
What's it like to be famous? Rachel Cusk imagines the life of M, a Hollywood A-lister who is on a mission to keep in touch with reality. We say imagine but Cusk, purveyor of brutally candid autofiction, has a magpie habit of lifting from life. M resembles Natalie Portman, whom the author knows. The novel has already caused a kerfuffle. If you have liked Cusk's recent works, you'll like this. If you haven't, you won't.

The Golden Hours by Louisa Young
Mantle £20, Sep 3
Elizabeth Jane Howard's *Cazalet Chronicles*, a five-book series that follows the Cazalet family from the 1930s to the 1950s, is a perfect comfort read, full of characters that seem to walk around in your head long after you have finished the pages. Now Howard's niece, Louisa Young, continues the story. *The Golden Hours* takes us into the 1960s, and a new generation of Cazalets.

Cold Sunset by William Boyd
Viking £20 Sep 3
Gabriel Dax is back. This is the third outing for William Boyd's travel writer turned reluctant spy. It's the early 1960s and Dax has been sent by his MI6 handler, Faith Green (for whom he has the hots), to help to get the triple agent Kit Caldwell out of Moscow. But it's a treacherous old world — who can you trust? Classy entertainment.

Taipei Story by Rebecca F Kuang
Borough £22, Sep 8
Lily, a Yale student, hopes to discover her Chinese identity when she goes to Taipei for a summer of study. But when her grandfather suddenly dies, Lily discovers a past so profoundly heartbreaking that it upends her life. This will be a mega-bestseller, just like Rebecca F Kuang's previous hits, *Babel* and *Yellowface*.

The Newer World by Sebastian Barry
Faber £20, Sep 10
In *Days Without End* Sebastian Barry followed Thomas McNulty and John Cole through the American Civil War. In *A Thousand Moons* we heard from their adopted daughter, Winona. Now Barry has returned to this unusual family and gives us the story of Tennyson Bouguereau, a former slave. Lyrical, evocative and remarkably dramatic.

Our Noble Selves by Kate Atkinson
Doubleday £22, Sep 10
Our Noble Selves is set during the run-up to the Festival of Britain in 1951. Harry Flynn, a war-battered journalist, gets a job with the team of oddballs who are preparing the extravaganza. There's plenty of comedy — bizarre exhibits, the madness of bureaucracy — but Atkinson, author of the Jackson Brodie thrillers, adds a missing woman (is it murder?) into the mix. Social comedy and spy thriller — you can't go wrong.

Switzy by Emma Cline
Chatto & Windus £18.99, Sep 10
David, a retired business executive, is on his last journey. The destination is Zurich. Old memories are awakened along the way, swarming in to replace the hazy present. But who *is* David? "An exquisitely rendered portrait of an unravelling mind," says the publisher of this Booker contender.

We Chase Shadows by Richard Osman
Viking £25, Sep 10
The rumour that Richard Osman types his novels on a cash register isn't true, but if this doesn't reach No 1 in the bestseller charts we'll be amazed. This is the second outing in the *We Solve Murders* series: in the Italian hills a body is found on the steps of a private villa at sunrise. The detective trio Amy, Rosie and Steve set out in pursuit of the killer.

Top, from left: Rebecca F Kuang, Barbara Cartland, Barbara Kingsolver. Bottom, from left: Stephen Hawking, Anthony Scaramucci, Evan Gershkovich, Dustin Hoffman. Below: Diana Rigg, the subject of a memoir by her daughter, Rachael Stirling

As chosen by Robbie Millen and Laura Hackett

The Housekeeper by Rose Tremain
Chatto & Windus £20, Sep 17
It takes a brave author to reimagine Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*. Luckily, Rose Tremain is more than up to the task. We hear from Mrs Danowski, the housekeeper of a stately home who begins a feverish relationship with a writer who visits frequently — Mrs du Maurier, of course. We know it will end in disaster, thanks to the unflattering portrayal as Mrs Danvers, but the journey there is no less thrilling.

Farewell to Eden by Sebastian Faulks
Hutchinson Heinemann £22, Sep 17
Philip Deval, a D-Day veteran, is sent to Palestine on a peace-keeping mission in the final days of the British Mandate. A new conflict is about to test him. Years later back home, Philip, now a teacher, grows close to the enigmatic music mistress. But Philip must confront the secrets and scars. The *Birdsong* author's latest is partly inspired by his father, who was stationed in Palestine.

Exit Party by Emily St John Mandel *Picador £18.99, Sep 17*
Are you sitting uncomfortably? The *Station Eleven* author returns with another unsettling dystopia. It is 2031 and peace has broken out: the Republic of California has been declared, the curfew in Los Angeles is lifted and everyone in the city — including Ari, just released from prison — is going to party. Except something goes wrong. A tale of doppelgängers, surveillance and shadow worlds.

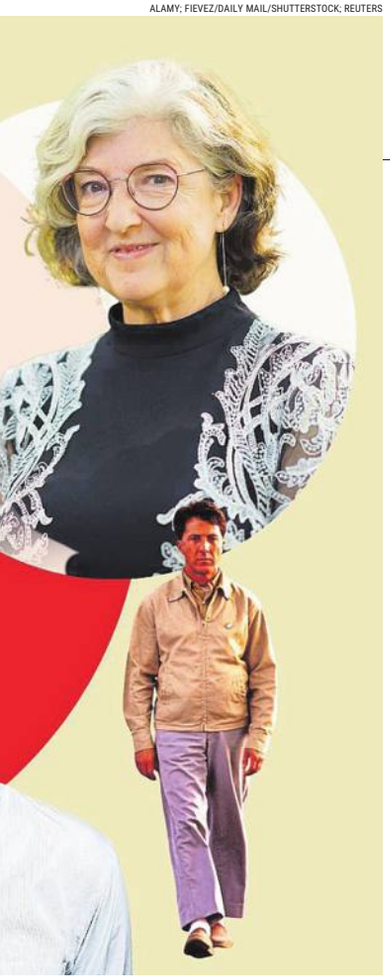
Stations by Louise Kennedy
Bloomsbury Circus £20, Sep 24
Louise Kennedy's debut novel, *Trespasses*, was a deceptively simple tale of illicit love during the Troubles that captured the hearts of many readers. Now she's back, hooray! *Stations* is about two friends, Róisín and Red, who grow up together in the same small Irish town in the 1980s. They both escape in their own ways, but will their friendship survive? Prepare for tears.

Dodge City by Patrick deWitt
4th Estate £18.99, Sep 29
It is 1967 and Lee Clarke, a nice kid from the small town of Concrete, Washington, punches a condescending hippy student and is expelled from college. Now he can't escape being drafted to Vietnam... When the letter arrives he decides to go on a road trip across America to see his dysfunctional family and escape the authorities. This novel by the author of *The Sisters Brothers* is funny, warm-hearted and beautifully written; we can imagine the Coen brothers immediately turning it into a movie.

Partita by Barbara Kingsolver Top pick!
Faber £20, Oct 6
As a child Livia had one escape from the poverty, hardship and tragedy that surrounded her: music. A gifted pianist, she wins a scholarship to college and new possibilities seem to open before her. Until she meets Sigurd, that is. Barbara Kingsolver's latest novel is an incredible exploration of the beauty that can be found in the midst of disaster. A real achievement from the author of *Demon Copperhead*.

Adam & Eve by Jeffrey Archer
HarperCollins £22, Oct 6
Read in a cinematic voice: "Armistice Day 1918. Two children are born on the same day, hours — but worlds — apart. One the son of a shepherd, the other the daughter of an earl. Adam and Eve. Their births mark the end of one war. Their love will change the outcome of another." This will be Jeffrey Archer's final novel, 50 years after his debut.

ALAMY; FIEVEZ/DAILY MAIL/SHUTTERSTOCK; REUTERS



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Life Out of Order by Audrey Niffenegger *Jonathan Cape £22, Oct 13*
Remember *The Time Traveler's Wife*? Perhaps you saw the film with Rachel McAdams, or read Audrey Niffenegger's story about a man who involuntarily jumps back and forth in time, and the woman he will go on to marry. In a long-awaited sequel, Henry and Clare's daughter, Alba, has an adventure of her own. A book club classic in the making.

Peck & Peck by Bonnie Garmus
Bonnier £22, Oct 13
At first glance *Peck & Peck* couldn't be more different to Bonnie Garmus's bestseller, *Lessons in Chemistry*. It follows Batter, a young poetry lover who manages to get a lowly job at the most prestigious poetry journal in the world, only to discover that it is threatened by an avaricious owner. But Elizabeth Zott fans will find much to enjoy: evil bosses, impressive mothers and one unbelievably heroic dog.

Lessons in Harmony by Jonathan Coe
Viking £20, Nov 12
Jonathan Coe, the British novelist behind *What a Carve Up!*, *The Rotters' Club*, *Middle England* and more returns with an *Amadeus*-like historical drama set in belle époque Paris. It's based on a true story: in 1907 the composer Maurice Ravel took on a new pupil, a precocious young English gentleman named Ralph Vaughan Williams. The start of an unlikely friendship or the clash of tempestuous rivals? Read it and find out.

NON-FICTION

The Cauldron: The Making of the Modern Middle East
by Simon Sebag Montefiore
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £25, Aug 25
The author of *Young Stalin* and *Jerusalem* is doing the equivalent of walking on hot coals by writing about the Middle East. His history of the combustible region, from 1900 to now, will explain why it is so often in the headlines. Simon Sebag Montefiore is brilliant at ferreting out telling details.

The Great Dictator: A Life of Barbara Cartland
by Matthew Sweet
Hodder & Stoughton £25, Sep 10
Top pick!
Barbara Cartland, that alarming vision in hot-pink chiffon, wrote 723 books and is said to have sold 750 million copies. Matthew Sweet's witty biography aims to get beyond her self-publicising myths. Turns out the queen of romance was rather admirable. Fun fact: she didn't use mascara but applied black shoe cream with a toothbrush. Now you know how to get the look.

All About My Mother by Rachael Stirling *John Murray £25, Sep 10*
Even now the thought of Diana Rigg kung fuing around in a black leather jumpsuit as Emma Peel is enough to send men of a certain age into a benign erotic reverie. The actress best known for *The Avengers* died in 2020 aged 82. Here her daughter reveals what she was really like. What a fun, unconventional woman; not your typical thesp.

More submitted by anonymous, collected by Gillian Anderson
Bloomsbury £22, Sep 10
In the 2024 book *Want* the actress Gillian Anderson fronted a collection of sexual fantasies of anonymous women from around the world. It was a bestseller, leaving the publisher panting for more. And *More* is what it got. "Bolder and more explicit... Nothing is off limits: there are silken ropes and stirrups, metal collars and machines..." they declare. We reckon the publicity department needs a cold shower.

Redwood: The Untold Story of the Cold War's Most Extraordinary Spy
by Ben Macintyre *Viking £25, Sep 10*
The Times columnist Ben Macintyre returns to where he's happiest: the world of espionage. The KGB major Vladimir Kuzichkin was a Soviet officer running a communist ring in Iran during the early days of the new theocratic regime. But Kuzichkin had a sexual secret that could ruin his life and career — desperate, he turned to MI6. A true tale of double agents and a high-jeopardy escape plan.

All the Wrong Moves: How Three Catastrophic Decisions and Years of Sh*tshow Politics Led to Trump — and How We Find a Way Out
by Anthony Scaramucci
Bodley Head £25, Sep 17
"The Mooch" was Donald Trump's White House communications director for 11 glorious days in 2017. But before that this blue-collar lad made good was a banker at Goldman Sachs, one of the masters of the universe. This eloquent book is a mea culpa, an explanation of how money people like him screwed middle America, making possible Trump. Candid and thoughtful.

How to Be Hopeful by Caitlin Moran
Ebury £22, Sep 17
The Times columnist Caitlin Moran had a bad case of *Weltschmerz* (too much social media, too much reality). So she went on a quest to see if she could feel better about the world. Over a year she picked litter, donated blood, rewilded a garden and rebelled against the algorithms that make us angry and anxious. Did it work? She looked happy last time she bounced around the office.

The rumour that Richard Osman types his novels on a cash register isn't true, but if this doesn't reach No 1 we'll be amazed

The House of Cromwell: Power, Family and the Making of Modern Britain by Miranda Malins
William Collins £25, Sep 24
We know about Thomas Cromwell, we also know about Oliver Cromwell. Two men who remade this country. But what we don't know much about is the families that forged these remarkable men. Miranda Malins dives deep into this private world.

Plunder: The Last of the War in Europe, 1945 by Max Hastings
William Collins £25, Sep 24
The last weeks of the Second World War roar back to life. Operation Plunder — Monty's men crossing the Rhine; the vicious resistance of Nazi Werewolves; the discovery of the horrors of the Belsen concentration camp. Max Hastings ensures the voices of ordinary soldiers and civilians are heard again.

Hawking: His Life and Work by Graham Farmelo
John Murray £30, Sep 24
In 1963, at the age of 21, Stephen Hawking was told that he had motor neurone disease and just a few years to live. He spent the next 55 years becoming the world's most famous theoretical physicist. The science writer Graham Farmelo tells his story.

The Steps by Sylvester Stallone
Seven Dials £25, Sep 29
Yo Adrian, he did it! The muscle-bound actor better known as Rocky Balboa has taken off his boxing gloves to bang out his life story. "A gritty, inspiring, heart-wrenching memoir by the Academy Award-winning legend and icon," the blurb says. Is it gonna fly off shelves? We reckon so.

This Cursed Beautiful Land: A Russian Story by Evan Gershkovich
William Collins £25, Sep 29
In March 2023 Evan Gershkovich, a young reporter for The Wall Street Journal in Russia, was seized by a squad of masked FSB agents. He was falsely accused and imprisoned for espionage, spending nearly 500 days in jail. This is not only his account from inside the bowels of Russia's labyrinthine prison system, but a heartfelt chronicle of Russia and what it has become.

One Helluva Ride by Michael Douglas
Headline £25, Oct 6
Some people were quick to dismiss Michael Douglas as just a pretty face, trading on the fame of his father, Kirk. But then he went on to win an Oscar for best picture as a producer of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Then another as best actor for Gordon "lunch is for wimps" Gekko in *Wall Street*. Don't worry, it's not all about the movies — there's also failed marriages, affairs, drink, drugs and rehab.

Napoleon and His Marshals: Victory, Rivalry, Betrayal by Andrew Roberts
Allen Lane £40, Oct 8
Andrew Roberts is a great admirer of Napoleon. He's also a great admirer of the collection of generals he gathered around him — Ney, Murat, Davout and more. In this grand account Roberts shows how, rather than forging a team of rivals, Napoleon created a nest of vipers, whose backbiting and vainglory ensured eventual defeat.

Devil on My Shoulder by Alice Cooper
Ebury £25, Oct 8
"No more pencils, no more books/ No more teacher's dirty looks," he sang. But that wasn't true. Alice Cooper has written a book, possibly with a pencil, about his "evilution" into the bad boy of rock. He tells us: "The slaughtered chickens, the bans and record burnings... the house fires and car crashes — all will be revealed for what they really were."

Good Mood Food by Tim Spector
Jonathan Cape £30, Oct 22
The man responsible for that uneaten tub of kimchi in the fridge is back. Yes, it's Tim Spector, doctor and scientist, and he is still very interested in your guts. In *Good Mood Food* he provides more than 100 recipes to not only nourish all your resident microbes but also boost your mood, energy levels and brain health.

Is It Too Late to Make a Run for It?
by Judi Dench
Michael Joseph £25, Oct 22
Dame Judi Dench is a national treasure. But isn't it a relief to know that doubt still creeps in. That's why she leaves a bag by the rehearsal room door in case she has to make a run for it. In this chatty memoir she details "her journey from school Nativity snubs [she wasn't deemed good enough to be Mary] to West End triumphs".

The Season by Helen Garner
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £18.99, Nov 5
Helen Garner is known as a beady-eyed observer of humanity — see her novels, true crime books and brilliantly candid diaries, *How to End a Story*, which won the Baillie Gifford prize last year. This is a different beast — her reflections on a season watching her grandson's under-16s Australian rules football team. A mini-epic about footy and much more, published in the UK for the first time.

42 Tales from Life: A Modern Bestiary by Richard Dawkins
Head of Zeus £30, Nov 5
Richard Dawkins's curiosity about the world around him is undimmed. He uses 42 tales to explain how animals have evolved into such varied, beautiful and surprising forms. Why hummingbirds are so colourful, the reason behind the shape of the rhino's horn and other mysteries are explained.

Look at Me by Dustin Hoffman
Gallery £25, Nov 10
Look upon Dustin Hoffman's work! *The Graduate*, *All the President's Men*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Rain Man*, *Kung Fu Panda* (OK, voicing Master Shifu probably wasn't one of his most important roles)... Now, at 88, the actor looks back on his early life and Hollywood years.

Gillian Anderson, Sylvester Stallone and Judi Dench

books

Bravo! A century of theatre, from Coward to Caryl

ROBBIE JACK/GETTY IMAGES

Celia Imrie, Alexandra Gilbreath and Stephen Boxer in Noël Coward's Hayfever at the Rose Theatre, Kingston, 2010

This history of the proscenium arch is fiery, incisive and tremendous fun. By Benedict Nightingale

One evening Noël Coward was eating alone in Sardi's when he spotted Kenneth Tynan, who had just trashed him in The New Yorker. They avoided each other's eyes, until Coward went up to the critic's table and broke the silence. "Mr Tynan," he said, "you are a c***. Please have dinner with me tonight." And so he did, having a particularly friendly, enjoyable meal.

That's one of several anecdotes that accompany Dominic Dromgoole's exuberant, entertaining, sometimes comical but always serious account of the history of the theatre's proscenium arch from 1865 to 1965, and it put me in mind of the author himself. Years ago Dromgoole wrote me maybe the rudest letter I've received, I can't remember what about, and then we had a most convivial lunch together. And that's what I like about the latest of several lively books he's written. Far from politely evading eye contact, it's direct, unpredictable, provocative, stimulating, fiery, compassionate, incisive, original and tremendous fun.

Unexpected, too, since his greatest successes as a director were at theatres that eschewed that divide between stage and audience, the proscenium arch. He ran the Bush Theatre, whose tiny space was sometimes contorted to contain dramatists like Billy Roche, enabling the action to switch from a pool hall to a church belfry in a twinkling. He was also the director of Shakespeare's Globe from 2005 to 2016, where among other offbeat endeavours he sent a pocket *Hamlet* to every country except North Korea, which wanted singing and dancing added. But he did also run the Oxford Stage Company and recently founded the Classic Spring company, which has produced plays in the traditional West End and elsewhere.

For him the proscenium arch isn't a barrier but a picture frame that allows an audience to focus more intensely on whatever occurs on stage. Yes, there have been plenty of cute comedies, flimsy romances and so on between the rococo cherubs that sometimes adorn those frames, but, he believes, audiences will always end up thinking about more than mere trivia, while dramatists have always been ready and eager to touch on the concerns of their time. Explicitly or implicitly, the theatre has been a service, a "live newswire".

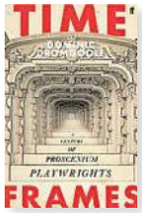
By way of demonstrating this, Dromgoole writes essays, long and short, on no less than 72 dramatists, from Tom Robertson, who invented the newly realistic "cup-and-saucer" comedy in the 1860s, through Ibsen, Strindberg, Miller and Beckett to the arrival of Edward Bond and Harold Pinter, whose inaugural 1958 *The Birthday Party* ended up playing a matinee to seven people, including the author.

He includes plenty of half-forgotten names, among them enough women, from the suffragette Elizabeth Robins to the black activist Alice Childress and even the Agatha Christie of (to me, though not to) undeserved *Mousetrap* renown, to force a rethink from those of us who regarded drama as more or less a woman-free zone until Caryl Churchill's daredevil advent in the late 1970s. He made me want to rediscover Dodie Smith and Clemence Dane in particular.

He gives one empty page to Chekhov, saluting him with an Irish 'beyond, beyond'

Should he have burst the book's bounds (it's over 500 pages as it is) by including the Swiss dramatist Max Frisch of *The Firebugs*, or Harold Brighouse, Stanley Houghton and the "Manchester playwrights" who jolted the north in the early 20th century? Maybe. But his only big omission is deliberate. He gives one almost empty page to Chekhov, saluting him with an Irish "beyond, beyond". After all, what else is there to say about a dramatist whose work magically yet very concretely represents what Dromgoole treasures, the "alive". Alive as in the unpredictable yet realistic ebb and flow of life, in all its pain, joy, laughter, sorrow, nuance, contradiction, detail and abundance.

It's when he misses this, as in TS Eliot's stately gloom, or Eugene O'Neill's "Church of Earnestness", or George Bernard Shaw's mania for control, or the haughtiness he hates in Harley Granville-Barker and others, that he has to fight to be fair, which he does and is. But he writes with infectious glee about those he finds richly alive: Bulgakov, DH Lawrence, Clifford Odets, Lorraine Hansberry and Seán O'Casey, whose 1926 *The Plough and the Stars* ("against



Time Frames
A Century of Proscenium Playwrights
by Dominic Dromgoole

Faber £25 pp528

Introducing Adrian Mole for Gen Z

Lissa Evans's novel about a boy aged 'fourteen and a bit' has a great laugh count. By John Self

Last year I was looking for books for my teenage son, who likes funny fiction but has grown out of stuff like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. I asked around about comic books for older children, and the consensus was... there aren't any. Young adult fiction seems to be mostly fantasy and boring issues-led novels. Too bad if you like to laugh. In the end I did what I should have done in the first place: gave him my copies of Adrian Mole and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. He loved them.

Lissa Evans, best known for witty historical novels such as *Old Baggage* and *Small Bomb at Dimperley*, is coming to the rescue. Well, sort of: she has written a comic novel for adults and older children. *My Name Is MacKenzie Bly* is narrated by a schoolboy with a cynical mindset ("Life is terrible. I hope you enjoy reading this") who's grappling with the usual complications of teenage life: parents, teachers, would-be girlfriends. The first thing he has to tell us is that, actually, his name isn't MacKenzie Bly. It's Philip Stephens, but he thought that was too boring.

On the novel's Amazon page it's compared to Adrian Mole, but that's not quite right. MacKenzie — Philip — may be close to Adrian in age ("fourteen and a bit") and similarly on the nerdish side of the school divide (schoolboy narrators usually are), but he has more self-awareness than Leicester's finest.

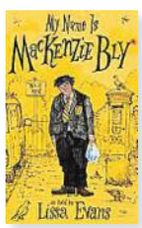
He doesn't expect to be liked, for example. He's "the size of a vending machine" — "I look like a door with a head" — and he has the mortal embarrassment for any pupil of his mum being a teacher in the school. Well, one of his mums: he has two ("Mum A and Mum B") and the other one is a plumber, who drives round in a van marked LET ME END-A-DRAIN YOU, "which doesn't even work as a pun".

And so we set off on an episodic journey through one boy's life in the fictional town of Ipsley Castle, meeting the adults and kids who get in Philip's way. The characters are succinctly but vividly sketched, such as the Pett sisters, who are quadruplets: "think of a ferret with four heads". When Philip's class is assigned to work experience placements, "all the Petts got shop work, which will give some tourist a heart attack when they go into four different shops and find exactly the same girl in each".

Or there's his biological father, a stoner and a biker who lives in a caravan and sometimes invites Philip round. "Dad realised he didn't have any milk, or tea, but he found some biscuits — well, he found a biscuit."

Evans knows how to be funny, as you might expect from someone who, before she became a novelist, produced comedy shows including *Father Ted*, *Room 101* and *Have I Got News for You*. She is a deft comic writer with all the tools: good timing, the right phrasing to bring the best out of a joke (at an amusement arcade, someone wins "a tiny plush Minion that looked like it had been used to clean the top of a cooker") and a smart way of building up running gags.

One such are the terrible ideas Philip's acquaintances have for board games: a well-meaning adult comes up with one about long-distance walking paths ("You have an infected blister. Miss a turn"); or there's Flewdo, "like Cluedo only set in an aeroplane. I pointed out that the only



My Name Is MacKenzie Bly
by Lissa Evans

Doubleday £14.99 pp304

ALYS TOMLINSON

Lissa Evans

a backdrop of death and sacrifice, we watch a daily struggle for life and see how much more important and *noble* it is than the posturing of politicians and soldiers") I myself regard as the greatest play of our era.

Caveats? Well, it's news to me that Yeats encouraged the riots that greeted JM Synge's 1907 *The Playboy of the Western World* to publicise the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. And Dromgoole is perhaps too enamoured of plays he has presented and/or directed: Oscar Wilde's mildly subversive comedies and Coward's *Hay Fever*, surely a lesser play than *Private Lives* or *Design for Living*, which he overlooks.

Still, his passion for truthful drama, however unconventional its source, trumps everything. Take *A Taste of Honey*, which a 19-year-old unknown called Shelagh Delaney from Salford wrote in 1958. Her characters "shift, turn, rearrange positions two or three times a page, rile, attack and squabble from ever-changing points". How refreshing a challenge its observant artlessness was (he says) to the snobbism of an academy that "would have us believe that cultural shifts can only be delivered by tortured souls cooking them up for decades in laboratories of modernist experiment".

After 1965, the close of this book, there was plenty of experiment with stages, modernist and otherwise. The proscenium arch was widely perceived as restrictive, obstructive, outdated. And there has certainly been fine work in theatres adapted to place audiences on three sides, four, at times almost upside down and inside out, in well-meant efforts to "involve" them.

But I don't believe those arches have had their day, nor, I think, does Dromgoole. Would Jez Buttterworth's *Jerusalem* or Tom Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt* or most of the plays of David Mamet and Churchill have had more impact if they had been presented on thrust stages or in the round? Surely not. And that means that the traditional picture frame, with us peering in and them beaming out, is here to stay.

cards you'd need would be 'in the toilet, with the cord of the headphones'."

In fact, page for page, *My Name Is MacKenzie Bly* has more good jokes than any novel I've read in years. When someone asked Douglas Adams about the meaning of *Hitchhiker's*, he said the book was "just jokes". Don't diss jokes: they're hard to do, and very hard to do this well. Still, I wouldn't have minded a bit more depth on some of the more teasingly depicted characters, like the Pett sisters or Jack Axley (who calls Philip "total eclipse" because of his size), or more of a sense of things building to a narrative climax.

As it stands, the chapters are as much sketches as episodes, although there's a great funny scene near the end, with a family reunion in a restaurant that keeps changing its cuisine because it's probably a money-laundering front. (They eat "cut-up bits of pizza crust spread with teriyaki sauce" followed by "sweet'n'sour kebabs".)

But remember, this is a novel for young readers as well as old ones. So I gave it to my younger son — the same age as Philip — to read some of it and tell me what he thought. His verdict? It's a "somewhat accurate" depiction "of what it's like to be 14 in the 21st century". And overall "it was pretty good". Coming from the jaded lips of Generation Z, that's high praise.

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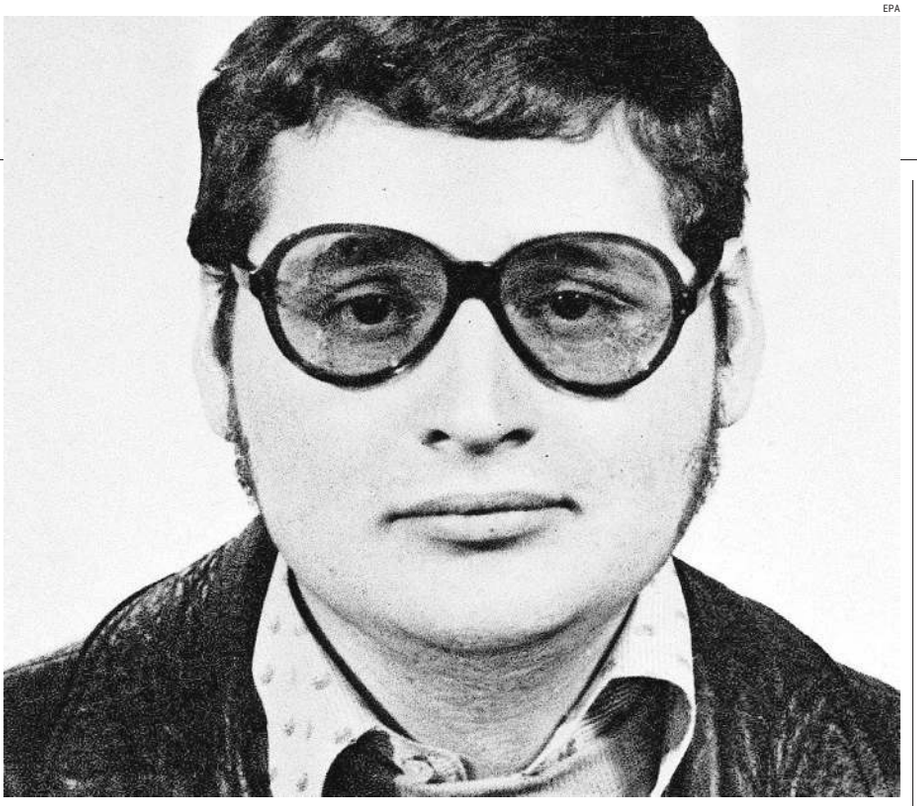


Psychopath, egotist, celebrity

Carlos the Jackal posed as a freedom fighter, but he was a hired killer – and a very inept one. By Gerard DeGroot

"I killed 83 people by my own hand," Carlos the Jackal once remarked. "Another thousand were killed on my orders." As with so much in his life, that was probably an exaggeration. He did, however, undoubtedly enjoy killing. "He was completely indifferent to the lives of others," a friend recalled. "He was able to kill someone and then go to a good restaurant without his appetite being affected."

Carlos was the son of José Ramírez Navas, a wealthy Venezuelan lawyer. A devout communist, Ramírez Navas named his three sons after his favourite Russian revolutionary — Vladimir, Ilich and Lenin. Ilich Ramírez Sánchez, who became Carlos, inherited his father's huge ego, his philandering nature and his luxurious tastes, but not his political commitment. He was, according to his biographer Joby Warrick, a "criminal narcissist" who cared only for himself.

In 1970 Ilich joined the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the terrorist organisation founded by Wadie Haddad. He had recently been expelled from Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow and was keen to escape the clutches of a pregnant girlfriend. Becoming a terrorist seemed a better option than facing his disappointed parents. Haddad was not at first impressed, but eventually came to admire the outrageous self-belief of the ambitious young man. He was given the alias Carlos Martínez.

Carlos became the Jackal thanks to the British press. In late June 1975 three French policemen, on the hunt for the Venezuelan, raided an apartment in Paris. Expecting to find only Carlos's girlfriend, they arrived unarmed. To their surprise a party was in progress and Carlos was there, flirting as usual. In a flash he shot two of the police officers dead and severely wounded the third. He then killed a PFLP colleague, who he assumed had betrayed him. When the press visited the crime scene they noticed a bookcase containing Frederick Forsyth's *The Day of the Jackal*. The Sun subsequently published a photo of Carlos with the caption "The face of the Jackal". Carlos adored the new moniker. "The jackal is a nice little animal, you know. It's a predator, but very pretty."

Carlos considered himself very pretty and therefore sexually irresistible. He estimated that he had had sex with more than 400 women, not always consensually. He liked fast cars, luxury hotels and gourmet food. "Just because we're fighting a revolution doesn't mean we have to eat crap!" he often remarked.

His healthy appetite, however, meant that he was prone to flab. Friends learnt quickly that they should not joke about his weight, nor about his prominent man boobs, since mockery threw Carlos into incandescent rage. In 1991, during a break between murders, he had liposuction performed on his breasts.

Carlos loved nice clothes — no surprise there. Early in his career he took to wearing a leather jacket, sunglasses and a beret, in homage to Che Guevara. While living in Budapest in the late 1970s he habitually wore a white linen suit and matching hat. Fancy clothes were, in fact, his camouflage. "You have to dress properly and behave properly," he explained. "Nobody would suspect me. Why should they suspect me? I don't look like a criminal."

Hiding in plain sight was, it could be argued, his foremost talent. Police were repeatedly stymied by his ability to evade capture. As for other aspects of the terrorist remit, he was, in truth, rather mediocre. "The real Carlos" Warrick writes, was "hobbled by the sheer weight of his massive ego."

Most of his assignments ended in failure, although he never admitted as much. An attempt to assassinate Joseph Sieff, the chairman of Marks & Spencer, in 1973 failed when his gun jammed. In the following year Carlos tossed a grenade into a crowd at a Paris shopping centre, killing one and injuring dozens. The act made no sense, other than as proof of evil. Then came a plan to bring down an El Al passenger jet at Orly airport in January 1975. Carlos headed a four-man team armed with rocket-propelled grenades. Poorly organised and badly trained, they fired two grenades, missing with both.

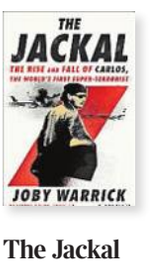
The next assignment was an attack on the Opec headquarters in Vienna, a project funded by Muammar Gaddafi. The Libyan dictator demanded that two Opec representatives — one Iranian, the other a Saudi — should be executed. The team of six terrorists arrived by streetcar during a snowstorm on December 21, 1975, Carlos sporting a fancy beret purchased the day before. On entering the Opec offices, he shouted: "I am the famous Carlos! You know who I am." To his immense delight, some of his hostages later asked for his autograph.

The Austrian government, keen to be rid of the terrorists, provided safe passage to an airport and a jet. The team and their hostages flew first to Algeria and then to Tripoli, where they expected to be welcomed by Gaddafi. He, however, refused to meet the Jackal, perhaps because he had reneged on the assassinations. The team then flew back to Algeria, where a ransom was agreed with the Saudi and Iranian governments. Carlos later claimed that they paid $50 million, most of which ended up in his account. It was always about the money.

The Opec fiasco was the last straw for Haddad. "You are an executioner, not a movie star," he shouted. "I have no place for... movie stars." Carlos was banished. He then went freelance, forming what he called the "Organisation of the Armed Arab Struggle". Despite the grandiose title, they were just murderers for hire. Saddam Hussein was a prominent backer, as was François Genoud, a wealthy Swiss businessman who admired Hitler and, like Carlos, hated Jews. The Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu funded an attack on the Radio Free Europe headquarters in Munich in 1981. Carlos's team blew up part of the building, but not the right part. Within hours transmissions resumed.

Warrick, a national security correspondent for The Washington Post and twice a Pulitzer prizewinner, reconstructs the Jackal's life in a surprisingly dispassionate way. The final verdict is left to the reader. The prose is at times a bit purple, but this is still a fast-paced, easy read.

In the Eighties and Nineties the list of countries willing to shelter Carlos steadily shrank. When the nations of the old Warsaw Pact, once a handy refuge, banned him, he escaped to Jordan, then to north Africa. He ended up in Khartoum, where his gang was reduced to petty crimes. The French, with help from the CIA, eventually found him in 1994 and sentenced him to life in prison. The life of the 76-year-old is now small, an appropriate ending for a man whose mammoth self-esteem had always camouflaged an abundant mediocrity.



The Jackal
The Rise and Fall of Carlos, the World's First Super-Terrorist
by Joby Warrick
Swift £22 pp352

Main: Carlos 'the Jackal' Martinez. Below: a casualty at the 1975 attack on the Opec headquarters in Vienna

books

Move over, K-pop — it's K-fiction

Korea in the shadow of war. Plus, Val McDermid's new act. By Antonia Senior

historical fiction

Book of the month

Song for Another Home
by Bora Lee Reed
Serpent's Tail
£14.99 pp320
It is 1950 and a Korean family have been torn apart by war. Oksoon and her mother and brother, who live in Pyongyang, decide to leave and find her father, who travelled weeks before to Seoul for a business venture. The journey will be dangerous — and how will they survive if they actually reach Seoul? Meanwhile, in the novel's second narrative, Oksoon's cousin Junho is trying to avoid the fighting. He lives in an orphanage in the south, run by a messianic and authoritarian director. Junho makes himself useful by using his rudimentary English to write letters to American women, spinning cute tales about the orphans to raise funds. Things change for him when the director's beautiful, privileged niece arrives. The two narratives collide and the family are confronted with difficult choices. In this moving debut by the Korean-American writer Bora Lee Reed, the guns and the soldiers are an offstage menace. The novel is concerned with how life persists in the shadow of war, and how small, happy lives can be devastated by careless decisions made elsewhere. Oksoon looks back on life before the war: "We harvested chestnuts and talked about books. We laughed at [her brother] Changho's antics. We used to live the most ordinary of lives. It was real."

Children of the Wild **by Kevin Powers**
Atlantic £14.99 pp320
Roy is straining to leave the valley in rural Virginia that his parents farm. Contemptuous of country life and his parents, he is college-bound. He is in love, though, with the pastor's daughter, Samantha, who, though she is expected to marry him, is repelled by his arrogance. She in turn has fallen in love with Ennis, a feral young man who lives up in the hills. Roy horrifies his father by enlisting, along with Ennis, to fight in the First World War. The two become friends, serving in the trenches of the Western Front. Samantha, left behind, is furious: "They had not gotten her permission. They'd never asked Samantha if they could gamble with what was dear to her." Although *Children of the Wild* stretches credulity at times, there is plenty here to enjoy, and Kevin Powers, the author of the war novel *The Yellow Birds*, writes with compassion about his complicated hero Roy, who begins the book treating the people and places that he loves with a cold carelessness, and endures a painful coming of age.

The Eagle and the Wolf
by Gordon Doherty
HarperCollins £18.99 pp448
In the confused last years of the western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD, a noble boy called Flavius Aetius wakes with a sore head and a patchy memory to find himself a captive of the fearsome Huns. He is there as a hostage, to seal a deal that means the Huns will fight for the ailing empire against a different barbarian tribe. Flavius is tutored in the ways of the Huns by a boy called Attila. The two become as close as brothers, as Flavius learns to ride the scrappy steppe horses and fight with a bow from the saddle. He learns to love mare's milk, he gouges ritual marks on his cheeks. As they grow older, Attila is taken to Ravenna, the seat of power of the later Roman Empire. To the young men, it feels as if they have swapped worlds. Flavius is the eagle in the steppe; Attila the wolf within the Roman world. This is the first instalment in a series that will follow the real stories of Attila and Flavius. Gordon Doherty has mined the sources, building a convincing and fascinating world. The first half of the book, which follows Flavius into the world of the Huns, is particularly strong — you can almost smell the horseflesh and fermented mare's milk.

This Door of the Seas
by Val McDermid and Jo Sharp
Polygon £12 pp160
In the 17th century a group of Scottish adventurers attempted to carve out their own colony in Panama called New Caledonia. The crime writer Val McDermid and her wife, Jo Sharp, Scotland's geographer royal, have combined to write a riveting short novel about the enterprise. The story is told through a series of letters and notes written by one of the colonists, James Wallace. Some of these are to his wife, Eliza, who is supposed to come out and join him once the colony has been established. Others are for his patron, Sir Robert Sibbald, the geographer royal for Scotland, and William Paterson, the moving force behind the expedition and one of the founders of the Bank of England. The first letters are full of hope and enthusiasm for the project. Slowly, the mood begins to darken. "Our leaders spend all their time posturing, debating and squabbling," Wallace writes, as the project begins to founder. Both the English and the Spanish are unhappy with Scotland's pretensions to imperialism. The English and the Scots share a king but little else. As the food supplies run low and the squabbling intensifies, the colonists begin to fear that they have been betrayed. An atmospheric read about a forgotten moment in history.

To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935

Rereading Disclosure by Michael Crichton

A female tech boss harasses a handsome colleague in this once 'shocking' novel. By Libby Purves

This stout red 1994 blockbuster — with the words "Sexual dynamite" slapped on the front — surfaced during a bout of spare room tidying. Michael Crichton's novel *Disclosure* is today remembered for the "shocking" suggestion that a woman in an office might use her power to harass a man sexually. The film adaptation ramped up that aspect, naturally, with Michael Douglas and Demi Moore grappling in Hugo Boss businesswear in a Seattle tech company office. But I remember another more interesting and perennial theme from the novel.

Tom is a division manager at the fictional DigiCom, Meredith a young woman from head office and suddenly his boss. They were lovers years before and on her first day she pounces, breasts-first and graphically.

Tom resists: he's married and a bit humiliated. The next day Meredith accuses him of harassment and he is offered a transfer, but he accuses her right back because it's a worse job with fewer share options just when there's an impending takeover.

There are fine escapist descriptions of daily life in corporate Seattle: Tom "in good shape — still within five pounds of his varsity weight", Meredith silkily "straddling him in her businesslike navy suit" in a locked corner office. But two other things drew me to reread it. One, for fun, is the tech: Tom's preoccupation is with the development of the CD-Rom and the company's handheld "Twinkle drive", which can proudly deliver "full-res digitized video at 60 fields per second... with hard copy at 1200 DPI and... LAN and WAN configurations".

It's a treat to be taken back 30 years to dizzying innovation, giggling at stuff like the miracle of mobile phone voicemail and the company's revolutionary "VIE virtual corridor", in which a headset and sensor glove enables you to "[convert] any database... into a 3D 24-bit color" and reach for company folders. Nowadays, when a teenage stocking-filler is a £37.59 virtual reality headset enabling you to fight sharks in an armchair, there's rueful humour in Crichton's tech.

And we are halfway through before Tom — preoccupied with CD-Rom drives — comes across a mysterious thing called the internet, explaining that it is "a worldwide computer network connecting universities, corporations, government agencies" and not part of his world.

But what made me remember this thriller for three decades is what it had to say about business and manufacturing. DigiCom's staff think the takeover will make them all very rich, the buying company's accountants are doing due diligence, with the Twinkle disc drive and a fold-out screen a selling point. But Twinkle suddenly has a problem and the Malaysian production line is turning out duff samples, to the horror of the design team and Tom.

Crichton tries to make us interested in the legalities and sprinkles pages with capitalised emails. There are tense board meetings where confident Meredith spouts gobbledegook for the accountants like: "If the laser read-write heads are out of sync with the m-subset instructions off the controller chip, what is that going to mean in terms of downtime?"

But like poor Tom we gradually realise she actually knows nothing about this stuff. She is a business school showfront, a political manoeuvrer, an inventor of fancy names like Dynocore, a reducer of costs and cutter of corners. Hence, maybe, a dangerous boss for a highly technical engineering division running delicate production lines in distant countries: might her pounce on Tom have been tactical?

It has a real 1990s panicking, fed-up-with-feminists zeitgeist feel to it

So beyond the sexual plot it was that battle, setting business school blather and swaggering promises against ploddingly careful engineering, that stayed with me. As a cautionary tale it has done the job ever since, seeing the struggles of RAAC concrete, the Challenger tank and HS2. Crichton's denouement, concerning the production line, is nastily satisfying. Was it the navy-suited she executive whodunnit?

There were some critical rows over that at the time and it's true that, despite Crichton prudently depicting two blameless female executives, there's a prematurely postfeminist sexism to the book, with its hapless Adam under threat from Eve with a serpentine Stanford MBA. Even in the opening chapter we have Tom's wife bossing him to make the children's breakfast, while she's getting ready for work. Later, he snaps that what with him, the nanny, the maid and partnership in a Seattle law firm she's "about as oppressed as Leona Helmsley". That has a real 1990s panicking, fed-up-with-feminists zeitgeist feel to it. Which, perversely, I rather enjoyed.

bestsellers

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Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for **Times+** members

You can tell it's summer holiday season. At No 2 in paperback fiction, say hello to *Dead Heat* by Sabine Durrant. "Under the searing sun, secrets simmer and betrayal lies thick," reads the quietly understated blurb. Here's the set-up: the jaded hack Matt Grimshaw gratefully accepts an invitation from two old friends to spend the summer at their house in Greece. But what's going on at the lavish parties thrown by a wealthy newcomer at the big house across the bay? Shades of *Gatsby*? Well, we can hope.

Elsewhere, we're still in Greece, the ancient version, as the long *Odyssey* summer continues. There are still three versions of Homer's epic poem knocking around the charts, with Emily Wilson's at No 1 in paperback non-fiction.

Paperback Fiction

1 (1) **The Correspondent** Virginia Evans *Penguin £9.99*
2 (new) **Dead Heat** Sabine Durrant *Cornerstone £9.99*
3 (9) **Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil** VE Schwab *Tor £10.99*
4 (new) **Adversary to the Villain** Hannah Nicole Maehre *Transworld £9.99*
5 (2) **My Husband's Wife** Alice Feeney *Pan £9.99*
6 (5) **The Names** Florence Knapp *Phoenix £10.99*
7 (4) **Odyssey** Stephen Fry *Penguin £10.99*
8 (7) **The Eights** Joanna Miller *Penguin £9.99*
9 (8) **The Artist** Lucy Steeds *John Murray £10.99*
10 (10) **It's Not What You Think** Clare Mackintosh *HarperCollins £9.99*

Hardback Fiction

1 (new) **The Lion and the Deathless Dark** Carissa Broadbent *Tor Bramble £22*
2 (new) **The Steelborn** Taylor J LaRue *Wayward TxF £22*
3 (1) **May We Feed the King** Rebecca Perry *Granta £14.99*
4 (3) **Yesteryear** Caro Claire Burke *4th Estate £16.99*
5 (6) **The Things We Never Say** Elizabeth Strout *Viking £18.99*
6 (10) **Dungeon Crawler Carl** Matt Dinniman *Michael Joseph £22*
7 (new) **Fruit Fly** Josh Silver *Oneworld £16.99*
8 (—) **Land** Maggie O'Farrell *Tinder £25*
9 (new) **A Trade of Blood** Robert Jackson Bennett *Hodderscape £25*
10 (—) **John of John** Douglas Stuart *Picador £20*

Paperback Non-fiction

1 (1) **The Odyssey** Homer, trans. Emily Wilson *Norton £14.99*
2 (5) **Careless People** Sarah Wynn-Williams *Pan £10.99*
3 (2) **Murdoku Volume 1** M Garand *Penguin £16.99*
4 (new) **Moonlight Express** Monisha Rajesh *Bloomsbury £10.99*
5 (4) **The Odyssey** Homer, trans. EV & DCH Rieu *Penguin £9.99*
6 (3) **Mother Mary Comes to Me** Arundhati Roy *Penguin £12.99*
7 (8) **Murdoku Volume 2: Back in Time** M Garand *Penguin £16.99*
8 (new) **Hyperpolitics** Anton Jäger *Verso £11.99*
9 (10) **The Longest Walk Home** Ray Bailey & David Wilkins *Quercus £12.99*
10 (—) **This Way Up** Map Men *Mudlark £10.99*

Hardback Non-fiction

1 (new) **Welcome to Your Life** Roland Orzabal *Constable £25*
2 (3) **London Falling** Patrick Radden Keefe *Picador £22*
3 (2) **The Odyssey** Homer, trans. EV & DCH Rieu *Penguin Classics £18.99*
4 (1) **How Lucky Am I** Christian Watson *Ebury £20*
5 (4) **BBQ** Jamie Oliver *Michael Joseph £30*
6 (5) **Biological War: A Scenario** Annie Jacobsen *Torva £22*
7 (8) **Things I Told My Notes App** Milly Goldsmith *Bantam £16.99*
8 (6) **Regime Change** Maggie Haberman & Jonathan Swan *Simon & Schuster £28*
9 (10) **The Let Them Theory** Mel Robbins *Hay House £22.99*
10 (—) **The Book of Birds** Robert Macfarlane & Jackie Morris *Hamish Hamilton £35*

Waterstones THE NUMBER IN PARENTHESES REPRESENTS CHART POSITIONS LAST WEEK. DATA SUPPLIED BY AND COPYRIGHT TO WATERSTONES FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 8

children's book of the week

A punky, stylish rip through the cosmos. By Lucy Bannerman

Let's hit the accelerator and get straight to it: *Star Breakers* is brilliant. Lots of graphic novels have been proclaimed as the next fix for *Bunny vs Monkey* fans, but this space adventure is a witty rip through the cosmos that soars above the rest.

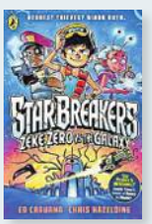
It's got sass, swagger and a likeable hero in Zeke Zero, a wisecracking 13-year-old thief who has been living by his wits on TrustPlanet's lowest-ranking planet. Grimlax 17b is a "lawless dungball of bandits, thieves and assassins who would vaporize you for a pint of grog and a packet of fried slugs. So, y'know, not recommended."

Zeke has only one rule: "Trust no one." That mantra is put to the test when he finds the wreckage of a long-lost treasure hunter's spaceship, steals the star map inside and embarks on a dizzying, planet-hopping quest to find an ancient god's eyeball.

A ragtag bunch of misfits are only too keen to help him to find it. There's grumpy Captain Tooms, a veteran "star breaker" who has spent his career searching dead planets for treasure but has only two soup spoons to show for it. And Astrid of Elsewhere, an antiques dealer with a knack for intergalactic languages and a mysterious backstory that will surely be explored later in the series. Can Zeke trust them? The quest has "near-zero chance of survival", so he'd better get cracking and find out.

Star Breakers is exactly the kind of stylish crowd-pleaser you might expect from an author (Caruana) who worked on Nickelodeon's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and an illustrator (Hazeldine) who worked at The Phoenix Comic. Caruana has also collaborated with Damon Albarn and Jamie Hewlett's virtual band, Gorillaz, so the punky, *Tank Girl* influence is strong.

Grizelda Grim, a spoilt zombie princess, makes a memorable villain. She's 500 years old, but has been frozen in a childlike state since the age of 12. She "toppled her parents' rule in a violent revolution at the age of ten" and, like any good baddie, keeps the skulls of her mum and dad on plinths, playing with them like ventriloquist dummies. "Oh, Grizelda, our darling GG, we are so proud of you!" she says, moving her mum's jaw. See? Told you it was fun.



Star Breakers
Zeke Zero vs the Galaxy
by Ed Caruana and Chris Hazeldine (9-12)
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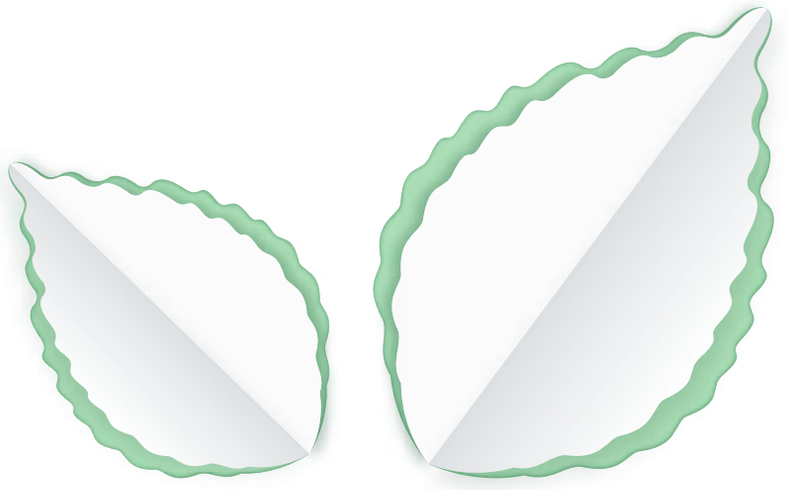

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European Forests: EU27 + Norway, Switzerland and the UK

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Television & Radio

Your seven-day guide to film, streaming and more

August 15-21

TV column Page 21 / **Streaming** Pages 22-24
Best sport Page 25 / **Film guide** Pages 26-27
TV listings Pages 28-41 / **Radio** Pages 42-43

His next puzzle

Ludwig

David Mitchell is back as the puzzle-setter and reluctant detective, with Anna Maxwell Martin as his long-suffering sister-in-law
Thursday, BBC1, 9pm

Best of the week

DRAMA

1 Professor T

Ben Miller returns as the eccentric university criminologist Jasper Tempest
Wednesday, ITV1, 9pm

DOCUMENTARY

2 Buried with Michael Sheen

The actor investigates claims of chemical poisoning near Port Talbot
Monday, BBC2, 9pm

STREAMING

3 Lanterns

A comic-book adaptation about a pair of intergalactic peacekeepers in Nebraska
Available Monday, HBO Max

PODCAST

4 Invisible Hands: The American Century

David Dimbleby's political series about the US's rise to superpower status
James Marriott, page 25

SPORT

5 Cricket: England v Pakistan

England meet Pakistan at Headingley in the first Test
Starts Wednesday, Sky Sports Main Event, 10am

TV Talk

By Ben Dowell

Morse enters the underworld

The hit Liverpool crime drama *This City Is Ours* returns to BBC1 this autumn, bringing another villainous turn for Shaun Evans — once beloved as the cerebral, music-loving Endeavour Morse. Since hanging up his famous mac, Evans took a dark turn as the violent serial killer John Sweeney in ITV's *Until I Kill You*, and now he's moving further from opera and vintage classic cars by entering proper Liverpool underworld chaos as

Ozzie Thompson, *above*, an old-school mobster freshly out of prison and demanding cash with menaces.

Disney snaps up Gary Neville and co

It seems as if the US takeover of football is continuing apace. Netflix has snapped up Gary Lineker's *The Rest Is Football* podcast for the coming season. But anything Lineker can do, Gary Neville can do just as well. Disney+ has signed up for 40 episodes of *Stick to Football* featuring Neville and his pals Jamie Carragher, Jill Scott, Ian Wright, Roy Keane and guests. However, claims that negotiations almost collapsed during the read-through because Keane refused to wear Mickey Mouse ears are, I am told, wide of the mark.

Farewell, Fringe benefits

It isn't just politics that is getting Mad fer Manchester with Andy Burnham's arrival in Downing Street. From next year the city will host the Edinburgh Television Festival, meaning the great and the good of the business will no longer gather in the Scottish capital to guzzle booze and chew the fat at the end of August as they have for the past 50 years. Naturally, this has annoyed comedy promoters, who rely on weary commissioning editors wandering into 35-seater basement venues to snap up Fringe talent. But the drinking should be fine.

Only melts in the building

It has been quite the baptism of fire for the cast of *Only Murders in the Building*, filming in London during the heatwaves. Because while Martin Short, Steve Martin and Selena Gomez are rubbing shoulders with local acting royalty like Olivia Colman, David Tennant and Martin Freeman, they have also stumbled on our nation's most embarrassing secret. "What's amazing is that London is not used to it," Short noted. "We're working with the biggest stars and they'll say, 'We don't have air conditioning.'" What's wrong with a £12 desk fan from John Lewis?

tvtalk@thetimes.co.uk

Don't keep them to yourself, share your favourite hidden gems (and those shows to avoid)

I was sad to read of Brian Wright's frustration that *Gomorrah: The Origins* is dubbed only [TV Talk letters, Aug 1], as the original is my desert island box set. He may be pleased to learn that the undubbed version is available, just hard to find — on Sky you have to click "you might also like" and select *Gomorrah: The Origins* without the "dubbed" suffix. In other positive news, I spotted on Instagram that a sixth series of *Babylon Berlin* is about to be broadcast on German TV, so it cannot be far behind coming to Now TV. My second desert island box set. **Paul Maynard**

What a wonderful character is Eileen — the best friend of Sue, played by Kathryn Hunter — in BBC1's *Ann Droid*. A modern version of Kathleen Harrison and surely deserving of an award. **Colin Demmery**

Les Francis mentioned Derek Jacobi and *Man of Straw* [TV Talk letters, Aug 1]. I thought that it was another lost classic, but it can be found on YouTube with the foot-tapping martial music *Prussian Glory* in the credits. **Rodney Duggua**

Why do so many foreign language programmes give us white subtitles on a light background? Impossible to read, so we switch off. And how do programme-makers expect us to read tiny text messages? They need to be shown as subtitles (on a dark background). **Sheila Linnell**

Angela Lansbury as Jessica Fletcher in Murder, She Wrote

my top ten

Cosy crime TV shows

Ben Dowell picks his favourite crime-busting feelgood series

Let us know your suggestions at tvtalk@thetimes.co.uk

10 Jonathan Creek 1997-2016

Locked room mysteries, floppy-haired Alan Davies and windmills. The ingredients that made David Renwick's sleuth such watchable television were many and that includes his often creaky (sorry) plotting. Davies's Creek was niftily supported by sidekicks Caroline Quentin, Julia Sawalha and Sheridan Smith and an array of guest stars that included Bob Monkhouse. *iPlayer*

9 Ludwig 2024-

The "fundamental thing" that attracted David Mitchell to *Ludwig* was that "it just seemed exactly the kind of programme I wanted to watch", he told me. And we love watching his eccentric puzzle-solver tackling fiendish crimes and the bigger mystery of his brother's whereabouts. Series two starts this week. *iPlayer*

8 Hetty Wainthropp Investigates 1996-98

Patricia Routledge, masterly at capturing a certain type of middle-class Englishwoman, carries this gentle 1990s detective gem with aplomb. As a retired housewife turned unlikely private eye, her USP is common sense, a bus pass and her teenage sidekick Geoffrey (Dominic Monaghan, later to star in *Lost*). Comforting television that celebrates the formidable power of a middle-aged woman with a notepad, a nose for nonsense and a kettle on the boil. *iPlayer*

7 Only Murders in the Building 2021-

This clever riff on the global thirst for true crime stories turns an unusual trio of two ageing and fading men — Steve Martin's Charles and Martin Short's Oliver — and a mopey millennial called Mabel (Selena Gomez) into something quirky and magical. Cosy sleuthing with wit and just enough edge, this has so far never made the mistake of taking itself too seriously. *Disney+*

6 Father Brown 2013-

This long-running drama starring Mark Williams is anchored by our leading man's quiet warmth and a genuine empathy for the flawed human soul behind every crime he solves with tea, patience and a deep understanding of human nature. *iPlayer*

Short, Martin and Gomez in Only Murders in the Building

5 Grantchester 2014-

James Norton took up the dog collar as the handsome vicar-sleuth in this charming show. A kindly and gentle man wrestling with the worst of human nature, he was fond of whisky and jazz, and had a wealthy socialite love interest called Amanda. Norton was succeeded by Tom Brittney as Will Davenport then Rishi Nair as Alphy Kottaram, but the lively double act with Robson Green's DI Geordie Keating didn't stop. And is there honey still for tea? Oh yes there is. *ITVX*

4 Columbo 1971-78

And just one more thing: Peter Falk's rumpled, cigar-chomping LAPD lieutenant ingeniously flips the classic whodunnit on its head, revealing the killer in the opening minutes and turning every episode into a brilliant masterclass in cat-and-mouse psychology when he got to ask his final question. *Sky/Apple TV/Prime Video*

3 Death in Paradise 2011-

There are many reasons why *Death in Paradise* remains a master of TV escapism — but it could be the scheduling. Broadcast in winter, it takes us to a sun-drenched Caribbean island, albeit one with a staggering homicide rate, and delivers a winning cosy-crime blueprint: an eccentric British detective, a charming local police team and a mystery solved over a cold drink at Catherine's bar. It doesn't reinvent the wheel — it checks the tyres before handing you a rum punch. *iPlayer*

2 Murder, She Wrote 1984-96

You can hear the theme tune, can't you? Angela Lansbury's Jessica Fletcher and her click-clack typewriter, trench coat and warmth was the sharp-witted aunt we all want. The genius of the show lies in its effortless charm: an endless parade of guest stars, hopelessly outwitted local police and a woman who always politely unmasks the killers. *5 Select/Sky Go*

1 Midsomer Murders 1997-

One reason for this show's enduring appeal is its hilariously inventive deaths — among them, by cheese wheel and an exploding gazebo. Attend a cast and crew press screening (as I have often) and you will hear everyone chortling away. But there is plenty more to this long-runner, whether it was John Nettles or Neil Dudgeon as the main man: the idyllic countryside, gentle plotting, or the occasional satisfaction at watching bad things happening to privileged people. It's one of Britain's most surprisingly successful cultural exports. *ITVX*

Carol Midgley on TV

The One Show is 20 years old… is its secret its utter madness?

British eccentricity is distilled into 30-minute bites on this reassuring, often surreal BBC stalwart

The One Show
BBC1

The Big Deal with Steph McGovern
BBC2

The One Show presenters Adrian Chiles and Christine Bleakley in 2009. Below: The Big Deal with Steph McGovern

Why is *The One Show* called *The One Show*, do you think? Is it because you watch it once, think, "This is borderline deranged," and never do so again? Is it because it is the one show in which you get the oddest, most random potpourri of guests and subjects imaginable, some high quality, some tat, a bit like the mixed offerings near the tills at TK Maxx? It's anyone's guess.

The title would make more sense if it was broadcast at 1pm, like *Pebble Mill at One*. But it isn't. It goes out live at 7pm, the theme tune consisting of the word "one" being sung repeatedly and manically for about 11 seconds before the camera pans to two hosts on the sofa who then say the other's name, not their own. It's like having a dream after eating too much cheese.

Fittingly there is reportedly a quote on the wall in the hallway from Mel Brooks who, while appearing on it, said, "What a crazy show this is." In an excellent bit of ad libbing he also said, "This is nuts, I want you to know," telling the hosts they needed to tell him when to be happy and when to be sad, so abrupt were the tonal gearshifts. I suppose it was only a matter of time before Alan Partridge parodied it and he did so splendidly in 2019 and 2021 with *This Time with Alan Partridge*.

Don't you find it has a limboish scheduling time? It feels too early to settle down in front of the TV, which means I hardly ever see it. When I asked my friends if they watched it only one said they did. But it gets about two million viewers daily so it's obviously getting quite a lot right. And it has just reached a big milestone.

Every day this week it has been celebrating its 20th birthday, culminating in an hour-long special on Friday evening. On Monday, with Alex Jones and Roman Kemp, it treated us to a flashback of the first show, which was broadcast from Birmingham and for some reason featured a youthful-looking Adrian Chiles — presenting alongside Nadia Sawalha — up a stepladder cleaning the studio windows. Don't question it, OK? This is just how *The One Show* rolls.

This week it had Russell Watson on the sofa for the seventh time with a very positive update on his health (he has been treated in the past for brain tumours, but there is cheering news now) and showed us a flashback to when he sat in that spot singing opera with Will Ferrell. Although Ferrell had to make up the words. As I said, this is how *The One Show* rolls.

Trevor McDonald was once asked, "Are you a ketchup fan?" When Morrissey was a guest and said his mother watched the show, the hosts waved at the camera trilling, "Hello Mrs Morrissey!" only for Morrissey to inform them, deadpan, that his mother wasn't married and that her name wasn't Morrissey (it's Dwyer). That was an unusual moment.

I will say this for *The One Show*. It is like a 30-minute distillation of British eccentricity, a sort of televisual biopsy of not middle England but "middle UK". It can turn on a sixpence from, say, clog dancing and recycling bins to terminal illness and Meryl Streep. (Yes, Streep has sat on the sofa. As has Robert De Niro. One of the appeals of this show for celebrities, I imagine, is that there will be no hard questions, only kindness.)

Like its ancestor *Nationwide* (remember that? BBC, 1969 to 1983 and presented by Michael Barratt, Frank Bough, Sue Lawley and Sue Cook, among others) it's a magazine show that speaks to the national character. It delivers quirkiness alongside tragedy, often with jarring segues. It tackles different things every night but always somehow feels the same, almost like a daily version of *That's Life!*

There have been gaffes, mishaps and awkward moments, such as when Gary Barlow had to abruptly leave the sofa saying he felt unwell and when the actor Dan Stevens came on to promote his new TV drama and launched into a diatribe about Boris Johnson. A few years ago fans of *This Time with Alan Partridge* signed a petition demanding that Steve Coogan and his co-star Susannah Fielding present an episode of *The One Show*, which would have been magnificent.

But the mockery is good-natured and, credit where it is due, it has done good works over the years. This week it reminded us of a heart-rending but beautiful story from a decade ago in which a little girl, then five, had a heart transplant donated from a little girl who had died in a car crash. It resulted in a 70 per cent increase in registrations for organ donation. That five-year-old is now 15 and wants to become a transplant nurse. How lovely is that?

The One Show has probably endured because it is reassuringly homely and old-fashioned. And, let's face it, where else would you see something as surreal as Harry Hill making Jermaine Jenas say "quack" while throwing bread at him as Dakota Fanning looks on?

The art of the deal

What does the art world desperately need? That's right, a reality TV show! One in which "budding dealers" with not a clue try to sell works of art to punters at auction. I'm sure that was right on the tip of your tongue.

McGovern is a decent, unassuming host who says she hates snobbery around art

I did worry that *The Big Deal with Steph McGovern* was going to be a sort of "*The Apprentice* at Sotheby's" when the presenter started to sound like she was reading from one of Alan Sugar's terrible scripts, only with a Middlesbrough accent. "Can you hawk a Hockney, bargain a Banksy, can you peddle a Picasso?" McGovern asked the seven pairs of "art curious" contestants. I'm no expert, but I suspect none of those particular artists would require much "hawking".

And then one pair, the friends Gavin and Liam, said, "We don't have a clue but we are here to learn," and I realised it can't be like *The Apprentice* at all. Because the contestants on that show would never say such a self-deprecating thing. They are all ghastly show-offs who say things like, "Everything I touch turns to sold," before showing themselves to be spectacularly useless. They don't effectively say, "We haven't the foggiest." One of these budding art dealers admitted to not knowing what "the female gaze" meant and failed to see the naked woman in a painting, which was sort of refreshing.

We did have a father and daughter combo who said, "Our age gap is our superpower," before promptly being booted off first for selling the least. It's always the way, isn't it? And there are a couple of geezers who think they have the gift of the gab but will possibly turn out to be all mouth and no trousers.

But this is a less combative, less showboaty show and McGovern is a decent, unassuming host who has said she hates snobbery around art, and hear hear to that (her father was a sculptor and she grew up surrounded by art). It is interesting to watch bidders fight over some pieces and completely ignore others. Reality TV has moved in on most art forms now, from pottery to jewellery making to interior design, and I suppose art selling was a logical next step. Although I still prefer *The Great British Sewing Bee*.

Streaming

From iPlayer to Netflix — best new shows and hidden gems

Survival thriller

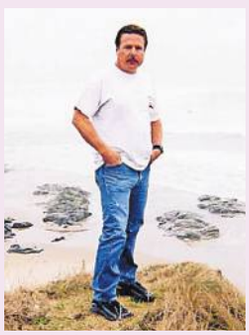
Taron Egerton and Charlize Theron play cat and mouse

Netflix

FILM: Apex 15, 2026
Available now

Charlize Theron's Outback nightmare

The River Wild meets *Cliffhanger* is the ambitious bar that the Icelandic director Baltasar Kormakur sets for himself in this high-stakes Charlize Theron action flick. She plays Sasha, an adrenaline junkie who, after losing husband Tommy (Eric Bana), flies out to Australia for some me time in the outback. There she encounters a crossbow-wielding psychopath (Taron Egerton), who announces that Sasha is now his quarry and that he is the ultimate apex predator. Yeah, but is he? Theron spent two months with a professional trainer preparing for the climbing scenes. She nails them. (96min) **Kevin Maher**



Whistleblower John Barnett

Freefall: A Reckoning for Boeing
Available now

After the release of Rory Kennedy's 2022 film, *Downfall: The Case Against Boeing*, which examined events leading up to the fatal 737 MAX crashes in 2018 and 2019, the aircraft company offered reassurances that it had learnt its lesson about its safety management. Kennedy's new film, a direct sequel, argues the opposite. Previews were not available at the time of going to press, but expect significant testimony around the former Boeing quality manager and whistleblower John Barnett, who died by suicide in 2024.

Love is Blind
Available Wednesday

New series

The British spin-off of "the anti-*Love Island*" is back. The format: 30 male and female singletons "date" in windowless pods. Then, only after getting engaged do they get to see each other face-to-face. They live together, meet the in-laws and, at the altar, decide if they do want to get married. It should be crazily fascinating, but the first two seasons have alternated between deadly dull and emotionally intense. Season three might see everyone loosen up a little. The hosts are Matt and Emma Willis.

Matt Willis and Emma Willis

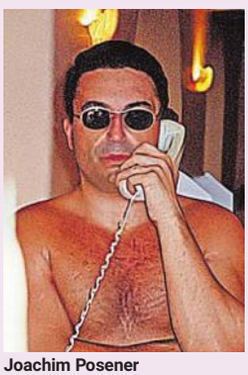
Greta Lee stars

FILM: The Last House
12, 2026
Available now

In this creepily effective psychological horror, Greta Lee and Wagner Moura play married couple Ann and Jason who suddenly find themselves sealed inside their suburban home along with their two children. Their windows are inexplicably unbreakable. They are trapped by an ominous, unseen, supernatural force. There is no escape and they soon realise that the outside world faces the same fate. As days stretch into years, the family must learn to grow food indoors, while battling isolation and the unknown force lurking outside. (112min)

Inside the Trustor Scandal
Available now

The Swedish financier Joachim Posener went on the run from Interpol in 1997, after he was accused of being the brains behind an illegal corporate takeover and looting of the investment company Trustor AB. Now, nearly 30 years on, Posener is willing to speak, on camera, to the director Karin af Klintberg, about how it all came about, and what he and his fellow associates have been up to all this time. A stylish mix of archive footage and reporting, the film is most compelling whenever the mysterious Posener is on the screen.

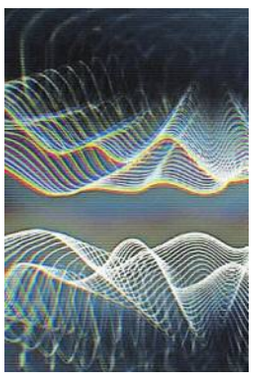


Joachim Posener

Apple TV

Calls
Available now

Screen-fatigue is a serious problem. Sometimes it's good just to lie back and tune in to some fine audio drama. You can even find it on TV. Adapted by the horror director Fede Álvarez, from a French series, this nine-episode anthology unfolds through a series of troubling phone calls. Abstract animations appear on the screen but it's better to just listen, allowing the voices of the stacked cast (Pedro Pascal, Aubrey Plaza, Rosario Dawson, Aaron Taylor-Johnson) and the eerie score to pull you into a warped narrative where time and space begin to lose their meaning.



Abstract animations form a backdrop to the voices in Calls

Classic 1970s TV comedy

YouTube

The Goodies
Available now

The recent death of Bill Oddie saw an outpouring of love from fans who had grown up with his grumpy, avuncular presence. The main reason for that adoration was, of course, his part in the 1970s TV show *The Goodies* alongside Graeme Garden and Tim Brooke-Taylor. Sadly, the series is not streaming anywhere, but YouTube has a wealth of material including 1973's Christmas special, an excellent episode of *Comedy Connections* and *An Audience With The Goodies* in which the comedian Stewart Lee interviews the trio about the show's highs and lows.

Channel 4

Jean-Paul Rouve and Guillaume Gouix in Polar Park

Polar Park
Available now

In Mouthe, the coldest town in France, very little happens. But with the arrival of blocked crime novelist David Rousseau (Jean-Paul Rouve) a serial killer is discovered, murdering their victims in the style of great works of art (Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*; Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe silkscreen). Very much a French *Fargo*, with the same moody snowbound atmosphere and droll black humour, this is occasionally too obfuscatory for its own good, but stygian pleasures can be found if you are willing to adjust to its quirky, measured pacing.

Under Fire
Available now

The third and final series of this Belgian firefighter drama drops us back into the fire station in Ostend that likes to play by its own rules. Thankfully, that still means saving lives. Season three sees two rival fire stations merging, and a new, hard-line manager commandant overseeing the Oosteroever rebels. It's all deliciously soapy and dramatic and the perfect substitute for anyone who has watched every episode of *9-1-1*, or *Chicago Fire*. It has become such a success in its home country that there are now escape room puzzles and board games based on the show.

Denise Gough stars as Paula

Worth revisiting

iPlayer

Paula
Available now

A Belfast-set thriller for fans of The Fall

Set in Belfast, this three-part 2017 drama stars Denise Gough as Paula, a chemistry teacher whose life is in disarray. A rat infestation in her basement brings her into contact with the labourer James (Tom Hughes). He takes out a rat with a shovel and after a couple of whiskies they're in bed together. "I've never slept with a man I've just met," she says. "This is madness – you could be a psycho for all I know." Hmm. What starts out looking like a domestic drama soon turns into a psychological thriller. One for fans of twisted thrillers such as *The Fall*. **Joe Clay**

East of Ipswich
Channel/time

Archive gem

Michael Palin's much-loved drama from 1987 about a sexual awakening on a family holiday at a Suffolk seaside resort. Its protagonist may be Richard Burrill (played by Edward Rawle-Hicks, *left*) – a 17-year-old who is dragged to Southwold with his parents – but it is one of Palin's favourite pieces of work because it is deeply personal. Palin and Helen Gibbins, his wife of 57 years, met as teenagers on their summer holidays in the 1950s. In the drama we see how Richard meets Anna, a Dutch foreign exchange student, finding a connection after an incident with local bikers. It's all very nostalgic.

My Hero
Available now

After playing the dim-witted priest Dougal Maguire in three series of *Father Ted* (1995-98), Ardal O'Hanlon was cast as George Sunday, aka Thermoman, the superhero from the Planet Ultron. Thermoman regularly pops out to save the planet the way other people nip down to the pub. He is like a loveable labrador with more bounce than brain, a child stuck with heroic powers. Not a great leap from Dougal to Thermoman, then, which is probably why it was went down so well. O'Hanlon had the lead role for five series, before leaving to be replaced by James Dreyfus for series six, which was the last.

Prime Video

A Beautiful Obsession
Available now

Directed by the always reliable Kevin Macdonald (*Touching the Void*, *The Last King of Scotland*), this four-part docuseries follows Pep Guardiola's final two seasons as manager of Manchester City. Guardiola's road to retirement is tailor-made for TV, and Macdonald is given unprecedented dressing room and boardroom access. Yes, we could have done with fewer celebrity opinions and more analysis of the club's owner (Sheikh Mansour), but at the basic level of fan-service this is a thrilling tale of collapse and resurrection.

A Wolf in Winter attempts to show Novak Djokovich's humanity

Novak Djokovic: A Wolf in Winter
Available Thursday

New doc

"He wants to be kind," insists Andre Agassi, "but he can't win when his heart goes there." He's talking, of course, about Novak Djokovic, the record-breaking tennis champ with the iron will who seems to thrive on pain and regards the wolf as his true spirit animal. In Jason Hehir's up-close 2026 documentary, there is an attempt to show the humanity of the man. What emerges instead is a sadness; of a player who is only happy when he's winning but knows that the age of defeat or retirement will soon be upon him.

FILM: Marty Supreme 15, 2025
Available now

New film

This acclaimed film tells the tale of Marty Mauser (Timothée Chalamet), a Fifties table tennis champion loosely inspired by Marty Reisman, who chases international acclaim with the subtlety of the Looney Tunes Tasmanian Devil. Gwyneth Paltrow plays Kay Stone, a once-celebrated screen actress making her big return to the world of serious performance (irony klaxon). She becomes Marty's focus, in between table tennis tournaments. It's the narrative equivalent of an unstoppable plummet down a precipitous flight of stairs. (150min)

more streaming next page ▶

ITVX

Universal Basic Guys
Available Sunday

New series

Basic animation combines with base motivation once again for the second series of the Malamut brothers' scrappy cartoon about two ordinary South Jersey factory workers made redundant and placed on $3,000 basic income, which gives them the time and space to pursue side hustles such as podcasting, motivational speaking and a "disruptive" app that does nothing. It's comedically patchy, notable for a star supporting cast in the form of Fred Armisen, Christina Hendricks, Chris Diamantopoulos and Tony Hale.

The Malamut brothers' cartoon Universal Basic Guys

Look Into My Eyes
Available Tuesday

New series

This four-part true crime documentary attempts to unravel the knotty case of Dr George Kenney, principal of a Florida high school, whose class hypnosis sessions preceded the deaths of students (one in a car accident and two by suicide). Brent Hodge, the director, goes deep into the case, interviewing Kenney, the deceased's parents and former students, and even unearths archival footage of Kenney's original hypnosis sessions. The show's refusal to challenge the statements of either Kenny or the families means that the final verdict rests with you, the viewer.

The Golden Spurtle
Available now

Every year, in the small village Carrbridge in the Scottish Highlands, the world porridge-making championships are held. A documentary about such events, labouring under this "cheeky" title" (a spurtle is a wooden dowel used for porridge-stirring) suggests something charming and quaint, focusing on the village's slightly eccentric inhabitants, and that's what director Constantine Costi hopes for, and she frames her subjects with a loving artistry.

● Previews by Andrew Male, Joe Clay, Helen Stewart, John Dugdale, Kevin Maher

Now

Possession
Available now

Gugu Mbatha-Raw stars in this "supernatural thriller" as Claudia, a lawyer dispatched to Jamaica. Her job there is to protect the right of Oliver (Jonny Lee Miller) to inherit his family's estate, in the face of a claim that his late father left it to the mysterious Cudjoe East (Sheldon Shepherd). Gothic tropes abound in Claudia's first visit to Hope Hill, outside which wild partying continues through the night; and soon a second narrative emerges, set on the same plantation when a slave revolt is put down. A Sinners-like historical horror as well as a modern legal parable.

Gugu Mbatha-Raw in the supernatural drama Possession

FILM: Song Sung Blue 12, 2026
Available now

Best film

Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson star as Mike and Claire, blue-collar ordinary people who meet at the Wisconsin State Fair, and hatch a plan to become the country's greatest Neil Diamond tribute act. Only some vehicular injuries, several near-death experiences and substantial drug-induced psychoses will stand in their way. The film is a polemic – a beautifully succinct illustration of character, class, the allure of fame, and the fantasies of superstardom that infect people on society's margins. (132min)

Elvis Presley: The Searcher
Available now

A two-part, three-and-a-half-hour documentary following Presley's creative journey from childhood through to the final 1976 Jungle Room recording sessions. The director, Thom Zimny, conducted more than 20 new "primary source" interviews (which are only heard, so you always stay with Elvis) with session players, producers, engineers, directors and other artists who knew him or who were profoundly influenced by him. Rare photos, and footage from private collections (there's a clip of Elvis's mother, Gladys, singing) augment the film.

Aaron Pierre and Kyle Chandler

Superhero premiere

HBO Max

Lanterns
Available Monday

Comic-book heroes by way of True Detective

After the cancellation of Disney+/Marvel's *Wonder Man* one season in comes another bold reworking of the comic book superhero. It's the Green Lantern heroes Hal Jordan and John Stewart remodelled as *True Detective*-style investigators pulled into an earthbound murder in deepest Nebraska. Kyle Chandler and Aaron Pierre are perfect as Hal and John — and Lantern fans should spot the ways in which this story will expand from its earthbound origins to encompass vast cosmic horror and the deep and twisted lore of the original comic book. **Andrew Male**

High Maintenance
Available now

Using the simple linking device of a nameless Brooklyn weed dealer bicycling around the city and delivering his product to various needy clients, Ben Sinclair and Katja Blichfeld's half-hour comedy show blossomed over four series, from a surreal sequence of witty character portraits into something profound, melancholy and wise. Given its subject matter, the show isn't for everyone and it can sometimes go to some strange and dark places, but at its best here was a poignant, funny and empathetic comedy about the importance of urban communities.

Flight of the Conchords
Available now

After an eight-year absence from the stage, the Kiwi double act of Bret McKenzie and Jemaine Clement are touring again as their alter egos, the awkward musical duo responsible for *Foux Du Fafa* and *The Most Beautiful Girl (In the Room)*. Sadly, there are no UK gigs confirmed yet, so why not revisit the original HBO series which remains a gentle hug of deadpan comedy and musical pastiches. The Pet Shop Boys parody, *Inner City Pressure* ("No one cares or sympathises/ You just stay home and play synthesizers"), is one of their parodic masterworks.

Apple TV+

NYPD Blue
Available now

Cult series

Thirty-three years on from its inaugural episode, it's astonishing how well Steven Bochco and David Milch's police procedural has aged. After working together on *Hill Street Blues* the duo crafted a far more authentic, radical cop show; dispensing with the usual modes of dramatic exposition and employing restless, documentary-style camerawork, overlapping dialogue and morally compromised protagonists. Its influence on *The Wire* and *The Sopranos* might suggest these innovations could now look dated. Not so.

Flex X Cop
Available now

Based on the Russian series *Silver Spoon*, this South Korean action comedy stars Ahn Bo-hyun as Jin I-soo, an immature billionaire heir turned homicide detective. He uses his enormous wealth and family connections to solve crimes, but he's also intelligent, can handle a gun and kick ass when required. Jin works alongside the risk-taking veteran detective Lee Gang-hyun (Park Ji-hyun) and together they make a brilliant team, solving most cases in a satisfying two-episode window, without too much overarching plot filler. A second season has just landed on Disney+.

Zoë Kravitz as record shop owner Rob in High Fidelity

High Fidelity
Available now

Less an adaptation of the 1995 Nick Hornby novel than an expanded reworking of the 2000 Stephen Frears film, this ten-part comedy drama from 2020 was cancelled after one season. Zoë Kravitz plays Rob, the sad-sack owner of a record store hiding her emotional failings behind her record collection. The original book and film were critiques of a certain kind of self-indulgent, locked-in masculinity, whereas this is more a story of female empowerment. It didn't help that at the time record shops were in dire straits, lending everything an air of ruin and loss.

The best of the rest

Paramount+

Average Joe
Series two, available Thursday

If you have an aversion to the preponderance of humorous eastern European gangsters in TV crime dramas, look away now. Robb Cullen's darkly comic thriller tells the familiar story of a plumber called Joe (Deon Cole) who discovers that his recently deceased father stole $10 million dollars from the Russian mafia. And now they want it back. Cole is excellent as the clueless Joe and the supporting cast bring a welcome naturalism to proceedings. Hopefully, season two, which drops today, will allow that naturalism to filter into the writing.

Deon Cole stars in the darkly comic thriller Average Joe

U

Hit Point
Available now

This is the first original drama series commissioned by U&Dave, and is written by Howard Overman, best known for creating the Channel 4 series *Misfits*, and stars Nick Blood and Saffron Hocking as detectives who find themselves drawn into west London's criminal underworld while investigating a £10 million cash heist. There is great chemistry between the two leads and plenty of quirky touches and old-school crime caper energy from Overman that elevate this twisty thriller above your standard procedural.

Pay-for film

Minions and Monsters
U, 2026
Available now on Sky Store, Prime Video and more

Jeff Bridges features in the third instalment of the pint-sized yellow henchmen franchise, and it's a school summer-holiday delight.

Hunter for the Wilderpeople
12, 2016
Available now on Sky Store, Prime Video and more

Re-released for its tenth anniversary, the New Zealand comedy from Taika Waititi (*Jojo Rabbit*) is worth revisiting as tribute-viewing to Sam Neill, who is excellent as a grumpy New Zealand farmer.

Sport The best live viewing

Champs Arsenal kick off their season

Arsenal, led by Martin Odegaard (*right*), begin their title defence under the Friday night lights of the Emirates with pressure perhaps to be more entertaining this season given recent success was built on set pieces. Frank Lampard's Coventry won promotion playing thrilling football to return to the Premier League after a 25-year absence and are arguably the best placed of the newly promoted clubs to survive. **Alyson Rudd**

Live Premier League: Arsenal v Coventry City
Friday, Sky Main Event, k/o 8pm

SATURDAY 15

Live EFL: Sheffield United v Birmingham City
Sky Main Event, 5.30pm

Both teams' opening match of the Championship season, held at Bramall Lane. Middlesbrough v Lincoln City on on Sky Sports at 3pm.

Live Super League: Wakefield Trinity v St Helens
Sky Action, 5.30pm

Coverage of the match at DIY Kitchens Stadium.

European Athletics Championships
BBC1, 7.15pm

Coverage of the evening session on day six from Alexander Stadium in Birmingham, including the men's and women's 4x100m finals.

SUNDAY 16

Live FA Community Shield: Arsenal v Manchester CIty
TNT Sport 1, 3pm

Coverage of the traditional curtain raiser for the new season, which takes place at Principality Stadium, Cardiff.

Live EFL: Burney v West Ham United
Sky Main Event, 4pm

The Championship match from Turf Moor. Watford v Southampton from Vicarage Road is at 1.30pm.

Live The Hundred: The Men's Final
BBC2, 6pm

The showpiece match from Lord's. The women's final is at 2.15pm.

European Athletics Championships
BBC1, 7.30pm

The evening session on the seventh and final day from Alexander Stadium. Team GB's Georgia Hunter-Bell and Laura Muir will hope to be contenders in the 1500m.

MONDAY 17

Live Tennis: The Cincinnati Open
Sky Sports+, 4pm

Day five of the hard-court tournament at Lindner Family Tennis Center in Ohio.

Live EFL: Cardiff City v Wrexham
Sky Main Event, 8pm

The Championship match, held at Cardiff City Stadium.

TUESDAY 18

Live Super League: Hull Kingston Rovers v Warrington Wolves
Sky Main Event, 8pm

The match at Sewell Group Craven Park Stadium.

WEDNESDAY 19

Live Test Cricket: England v Pakistan
Sky Main Event, 10am

Coverage of the opening day of the first Test in the three-match series, held at Headingley in Leeds.

Joe Root (from Wednesday, Sky Main Event, 10am)

ITV Racing: Live from York
ITV1, 1.30pm

Coverage of the opening day of the Ebor Meeting, including the Juddmonte International Stakes, the feature race.

Live Champions League: Celtic v LASK
TNT Sports 1, 8pm

The play-off round first-leg match from Celtic Park.

THURSDAY 20

Live PGA Tour Golf: The BMW Championship
Sky Golf, 5.30pm/8pm

Coverage of the featured groups on day one of the second tournament in the FedExCup Playoffs, held at Bellerive Country Club in St Louis, Missouri.

Live EFL: Sheffield Wednesday v Bradford City
Sky Main Event, 8pm

The League One match at Hillsborough, as the Yorkshire rivals meet for the first time since the 2022/23 season

FRIDAY 21

Live World Series of Darts: Australian Masters
ITV4, 10am

Day one featuring first-round matches at WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong.

Live Super League: Wigan Warriors v Wakefield Trinity
Sky Action, 8pm

The match at Brick Community Stadium.

Podcasts

Historic moments with David Dimbleby? Count me in

The broadcaster's story of America needs all your attention, says James Marriott

Invisible Hands: The American Century
Available on Sounds, Spotify, Apple and more

'I want to introduce you to a man I met 50 years ago in Tehran. It was 1976 when I interviewed him." The man in question is the shah of Iran. Not someone many podcasters can claim to have spoken to. But we can all agree that David Dimbleby, 87, gives a higher class of podcast. Another episode features a brief clip of Dimbleby quizzing President Clinton about whether oral sex counts as sexual relations. There's something quite cool about the casual way Dimbleby's new podcast drops these historic moments in. You don't get that on Joe Rogan.

Dimbleby's new podcast is *Invisible Hands: The American Century*. In it he tells "the story of how the United States became a superpower at the head of a new global order". This is not the tale of America's rise to cultural dominance via Coca-Cola and pop music. It is, rather, a story of high politics and high policy: important men thrashing out big ideas in consequential meetings. Expect a lot of commentary about the sound of shuffled papers and smoke drifting across conference rooms.

So, for instance, we get an episode recounting the career of Harry Dexter White ("probably the most important person nobody's ever heard of"). White was an architect of the International Monetary Fund and one of the key players at Bretton Woods, which laid out a postwar economic order dominated by the dollar as the global reserve fund. Another episode follows George Kennan, author of the famous diplomatic cables warning of the evils of Stalin's Russia.

Man by man, Dimbleby excavates the foundations of postwar power. If White believed in a global economic order led by America, Dimbleby explains that Kennan took a more pessimistic view of the world. "He wanted America to push back on the world, he wanted to contain communism." The story of Allen Dulles and the CIA he ran shows how the secret service gave America a way of attempting to conduct

David Dimbleby

its power in a discreet way as opposed to the arrogant "gunboat diplomacy" of previous global hegemons.

This tale of telegrams and anger is potentially dry stuff. But the producers have worked hard to bring it to life. The economic ideas are nicely simplified. ("You needed to have order in the global economic system. And in White's case he felt that order would come from the US dollar.") There is some excellent scene-setting and characterisation: White's "teeth, which count for so much in America, show signs of decay". The Bretton Woods conference is milked for drama via White's rivalry with John Maynard Keynes. And there are even a few judiciously deployed sound effects (a hubbub of talk signals a conference in progress).

Listeners will recognise all the ear-grabbing tricks from the glossy narrative podcast playbook pioneered by *Serial*. There is something rather endearing (but also effective) about hearing a broadcaster as venerable as Dimbleby pulling them off. He gives no impression of feeling that he is too grand for proceedings and adapts himself commendably to the chattier atmosphere demanded by this kind of show. At the same time he adds valuable gravitas to a style that can feel hackneyed.

It's all good stuff and yet, as furrow-browed listeners try to get their heads around the nuances of the competing world views of Kennan, White and Dulles, they may begin to feel that *Invisible Hands: The American Century* is trying to fit rather a lot in.

In the first episode alone we get an overview of the careers of White and Keynes. We get the basics of the economic argument. We get some good archive footage. We get an interview with White's granddaughter, who remembers the scars left on the family by White's eventual denunciation as a communist agent. There is a lot to learn here. It is all excellently presented. But listeners will have to concentrate.

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THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Films

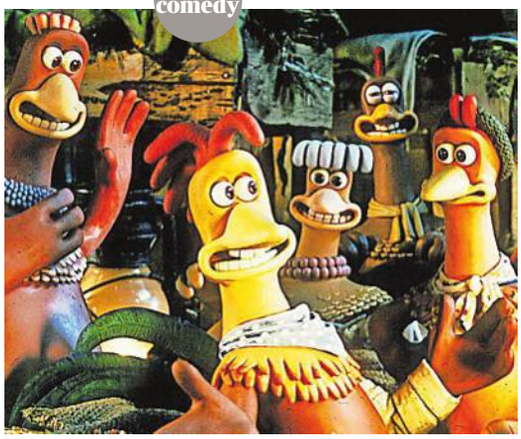
What movies to watch or record on television this week

Saturday August 15

Chicken Run U, 2000
BBC1, 2.30pm

Aardman Animations' marvellous debut collaboration with the Hollywood studio DreamWorks takes place in a sepia-tinted Yorkshire that Alan Bennett might recognise. Essentially a Second World War prison-camp movie, but with poultry, *Chicken Run* features the voices of Miranda Richardson, Julia Sawalha and Jane Horrocks, with Mel Gibson adding Hollywood appeal as the courageous Rocky the rooster. The humour is gentle in the extreme, but the pie making machine is a stroke of diabolical genius. (84min)

Family comedy



Chicken Run: a war prison-camp movie, but with poultry

Superman III PG, 1983
BBC2, 5.30pm

Christopher Reeve's Man of Steel is up against villainous billionaire Ross Webster (Robert Vaughn), who blackmails Richard Pryor's computer whizz Gus Gorman into helping him with his schemes. When Superman puts a stop to it, Webster has Gorman create artificial Kryptonite, which turns our hero evil (his nefarious acts include straightening the Leaning Tower of Pisa) and splits him into two beings — the corrupted Superman and Clark Kent. The fourth film in the franchise, *Superman IV: The Quest For Peace*, is on tomorrow at 12.35pm. (125min)

Skyfall 12, 2012
ITV1, 8pm

The hype surrounding the third outing of Daniel Craig as 007 would have you believe that it was the best James Bond film in the franchise's history. There is no question that this picture, directed by Sam Mendes, contains some crucial elements that are frequently lacking in action movies. The cinematography by Roger Deakins is sublime; there is a credible emotional core to the story, which deals with the relationship between Bond and M, played by Judi Dench; and there is a great supporting cast, with Javier Bardem as the megalomaniac baddie Silva. (143min)

The Graduate 12, 1967
BBC2, 11.40pm

It's a testament to the acting and the sly directorial flourishes of Mike Nichols that Dustin Hoffman convinces as 21-year-old student Benjamin. He floats in his parents' pool to Simon and Garfunkel, contemplating his desire for Anne Bancroft's Mrs Robinson and his love for ingenuous student Elaine. Benjamin's belief that the "wrong people" in Sixties America are "making the rules" gives him countercultural cachet, but he's also weak, exploitative and entitled. Conversely, Bancroft's character is dignified, elegant and brutally honest. (106min)

Vintage sci-fi

The Quatermass Experiment
PG, 1955
Sunday, Talking Pictures TV, 8.05pm

The sci-fi that inspired Stephen King

A rocket crashed to Earth, a crew member mutating into an alien, Professor Quatermass with hours to stop catastrophe... little wonder Hammer's sci-fi horror was a huge hit in 1955. Based on Nigel Kneale's 1953 TV serial, it was only the 12th X-rated film (and renamed *The Quatermass Xperiment* to highlight the fact). The Westminster Abbey climax is memorable, as is the alien's Frankenstein-like encounter with a child (a very young Jane Asher). Of its time, yes, but find out why Stephen King and John Carpenter have named it as a favourite. (82min) **James Jackson**

Monday August 17

I, Tonya 15, 2017
Sky Cinema Drama, 8pm

A furiously engaging film that features Margot Robbie, on an ice rink, suffering brutalising domestic abuse and, significantly, transforming fourth-wall-breaking into a nearly sublime art form. She plays Tonya Harding, the former competitive figure skater known as "the most hated woman in America" for her role in the 1994 hobbling of her rival, Nancy Kerrigan. The incident happens late in the film and is presaged by a vitriolic camera address from our volatile protagonist. "It's what you came for, folks, isn't it?" she hisses at the viewer. It's a dark and often blackly humorous thrill ride. (119min)

Apollo 13
PG, 1995
ITV4, 9pm

Factual drama

Ron Howard's gripping account of the ill-fated Apollo 13 mission to the moon stars Tom Hanks, Bill Paxton and Kevin Bacon as the astronauts Jim Lovell, Fred Haise and Jack Swigert respectively. The three men embark on what is slated to be the third lunar landing, but an explosion causes catastrophic damage, threatening the oxygen supply of the men and reducing their chances of survival to minimal. Ed Harris plays the mission control leader trying to bring the men home. Howard milks the pathos and tragedy of the situation, but Hanks brings a quiet dignity. (133min)

Brassed Off 15, 1996
Film4, 9pm

The colliery is threatened with closure, and with it will go the brass band, a 100-year-old institution and source of local pride. The miners must decide whether to fight for the mine, the band and, by extension, the town. The arrival of winsome flugelhorn player Gloria (Tara Fitzgerald) injects some life, and leader Danny, a retired miner played by Pete Postlethwaite, urges his musicians to band together once more for a national competition. Danny's health is poor; the band gives him the will and the strength to fight his ailments. (108min)

Tuesday August 18

Shenandoah PG, 1965
Film4, 3.15pm

James Stewart stars in this Civil War drama as the wealthy patriarch Charlie Anderson. Along with his six sons, Charlie isolates himself from the conflict that surrounds him, refusing to take sides in the war. But Charlie's daughter falls in love with a Confederate officer and marries him, only to be parted immediately when he is called back to the front. Meanwhile, his youngest son is mistakenly captured by Union soldiers. While Charlie is out searching for the boy, tragedy strikes back at home on the ranch. It is a film that dares to ask questions about war and patriotism. (105min)

A Dandy in Aspic 12, 1968
Talking Pictures TV, 9pm

Alexander Eberlin is a British spy in an unusual position. He has been sent to kill Krasnevin, a Russian assassin responsible for the murder of several British agents. The problem is, Eberlin is a spy with two identities, and he has just been ordered to kill his other self. Anthony Mann's adaptation of Derek Marlowe's 1966 Cold War spy novel is full of class, gentle espionage and top-notch tailoring. Laurence Harvey plays Eberlin, with Tom Courtenay as rival British agent Gatiss and Mia Farrow as Eberlin's lover, the socialite and photographer Caroline Hetherington. (107min)

Sean Connery and Kevin Costner lead The Untouchables

The Untouchables 15, 1987
BBC1, 10.40pm

Brian De Palma shows his customary flair with this stylish account of a feud between the mobster Al Capone (Robert De Niro) and the lawman Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner). Due to the corruption that eats away the heart of the law enforcement agencies of the 1920s, Ness carefully handpicks an elite team of clean cops to help bring the notorious gangster to justice. Sean Connery won an Oscar for playing the veteran Irish cop who forms an integral part of the Ness squad. Prohibition-era Chicago is riddled with bullets by the end. (119min)

Wednesday August 19

Ring of Spies
PG, 1964
Talking Pictures TV, 1.35pm

Spy thriller

One of the handful of feature films directed by the TV director Robert Tronson (*The Avengers*, *Hetty Winthrop Investigates*), *Ring of Spies* deals with the Portland spy case. Bernard Lee and Margaret Tyzack play Harry Houghton and his mistress, Ethel Gee, who were passing naval secrets to the London-based KGB man Gordon Lonsdale (William Sylvester). It was completed as Lonsdale was about to be exchanged for the British spy Greville Wynne and there was speculation that the film's release was cut short after pressure from MI5. (90min)

Genevieve U, 1953
Talking Pictures TV, 7.35pm

This 1953 British comic caper is part Ealing comedy, part wacky races. Having chugged their way through the annual London to Brighton veteran car run, friends Alan McKim

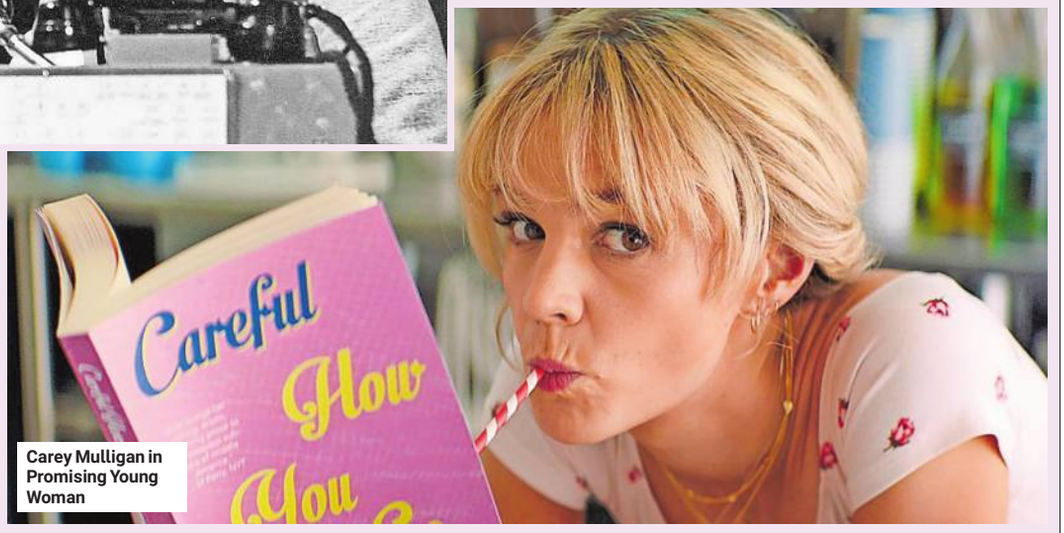
The Quatermass Experiment

Promising Young Woman
15, 2020
Monday, Sky Atlantic, 9pm

Emerald Fennell's debut

Revenge thriller

This is a film about misogyny. It's the story of a rape, and a suicide, and a life upturned. It's also a movie that crackles and fizzes with style and wit and blackly humorous subtext. It's written and directed by Emerald "*Saltburn*" Fennell, making her feature debut with a gobsmacking display of authorial nous. Carey Mulligan is perfectly cast as Cassandra, a barista dealing with the death of her best friend, the victim of a university rape and subsequent downward spiral. But Cassandra is also symbolic expression of female rage. (113min) **Kevin Maher**



Carey Mulligan in Promising Young Woman

Sunday August 16

The French Connection
18, 1971
BBC2, 10pm

Retro classic

William Friedkin's Oscar-winning drama features a sensational car chase; a blistering hell ride with Gene Hackman hunched at the wheel of the growling Pontiac, trying to outstrip a train. It's rightly considered to be one of the greatest car-chase sequences, but the rest of the film is just as good. Gritty, downbeat and, in Hackman's "Popeye" Doyle, fronted by one of the most unlikely heroes, this is one of the great movies of Hollywood's most creatively uncompromising period. (104min)

Alice, Darling 15, 2022
Channel 4, 11.05pm

Anna Kendrick stars in this "toxic relationship" thriller. Charlie Carrick is Simon, a passive-aggressive "charmer" who uses the language of empowerment to manipulate his girlfriend Alice (Kendrick), isolating her from her friends and work colleagues, and reducing her to a bullied dependant. A week away at a lakeside cabin, however, with her girlfriends creates a fracture in Simon's coercive routine, slowly illustrating to Alice her dependency patterns. The British director Mary Nighy layers in a local murder case that adds gravitas. (89min)

Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty in Bonnie and Clyde

Bonnie and Clyde 18, 1967
BBC2, 11.40pm

The iconic outlaw lovers, charismatically brought to life by Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty, combined two of Hollywood's key interests: sex and violence. The gangster movie was given a countercultural makeover — suddenly the bad guys were the ones with whom the audience were expected to sympathise. Depression-era America is a dust bowl of photogenic desperation; the savagery of Bonnie and Clyde's crime spree is only slightly disarmed by the gallows humour of the screenplay. (112min)

(John Gregson) and Ambrose Claverhouse (Kenneth More) strike a wager to race back to London and be the first over Westminster Bridge. Cue sabotage, scrapes and many cries of "Bad luck, old chap!" Dinah Sheridan and Kay Kendall play McKim's long-suffering wife and the louche Claverhouse's latest squeeze, respectively. Kendall's drunken jazz trumpet solo is a gem. (86min)

Monkey Man 15, 2024
BBC1, 11.30pm

The *Slumdog Millionaire* star Dev Patel makes his directorial debut with an audacious action flick set on the neon-soaked night-time streets of the fictional city of Yatana (filmed in Mumbai and Indonesia). Here mobsters rule, venal politicians thrive and all hope rests in the murderously effective hands of an unnamed after hours, fight-club boxer played by Patel (a taekwondo black belt). This is a stylised cinematic head-butt, a movie so startling in execution that it makes its genre cousins, such as the John Wick movies, seem anaemic by comparison. (121min)

Thursday August 20

Heat 15, 1996
Film4, 9pm

Best crime

This outstanding crime movie, written and directed by Michael Mann, is a career high point for pretty much everyone involved and serves as a useful reminder of just why Robert De Niro and Al Pacino are two of our greatest living actors. De Niro plays the career criminal Neil McCauley, whose addiction to the thrill of the heist is interfering with his plans to retire from the game. Pacino is the LAPD officer whose dedication to the job borders on an obsession that has all but destroyed his home life. To further complicate matters, De Niro falls in love. (170min)

Tár 15, 2022
BBC2, 12.05am

Collaborating with Cate Blanchett, for whom the film was written, the director Todd Field creates a weighty portrait of a revered conductor called Lydia Tár who finds herself in the grip of a suffocating career crisis. She's launching, in New York, a book of theoretical analysis while preparing for an eagerly awaited performance. And then a scandal breaks that places the powerful, flirtatious Tár on the wrong side of a potential Me Too abuse case. There is a lot to digest here, and there are enormous early sections that unfold in slow, unfussy real time, but Blanchett puts in a giant performance. (158min)

Chopper 18, 2000
Film4, 12.20am

This biographical drama about the exploits and prison years of the Australian criminal Mark "Chopper" Read is a must watch for students of screen acting. Eric Bana, in the title role and a novice actor at the time — and from underneath 30lb of weight gain — delivers a performance so terrifying that his nascent film career never quite recovered. He's had successes since, but these pale when compared with his Chopper, a character who moves on film from prison stabbings in 1978 to mid-1980s domestic violence and mobster shootings with coiled intensity. (91min)

Friday August 21

Mort d'un pourri
15, 1977
Talking Pictures TV, 9.05pm

Cult thriller

This 1977 French political thriller has been known by many names — *Death of a Corrupt Man*, *The Twisted Detective*, *Death of a Swine* and *To Kill a Rat*. Based on the novel by Raf Vallet, it stars Alain Delon as Xavier Maréchal, who agrees to help his politician pal Philippe Dubaye cover up the murder of a well-connected mobster. The famously temperamental Klaus Kinski had a supporting role, but was good as gold on set. The moody score was composed by Philippe Sarde, and features the saxophonist Stan Getz. (120min)

27 Dresses 12, 2008
BBC1, 10.40pm

Katherine Heigl stars as Jane Nichols, a young woman so enamoured with weddings that not only has she been a bridesmaid at 27 of them, she's also the go-to girl to whom

Alain Delon and Ornella Muti in Mort d'un pourri

frantic brides turn to iron out a seating plan disaster or a canapé crisis. But as Jane finds herself planning the wedding of her feckless younger sister to the man she herself secretly loves, it looks increasingly likely that she's going to end up an "old maid". However, there's a suitor on the sidelines in the form of James Marsden's newspaper reporter. (106min)

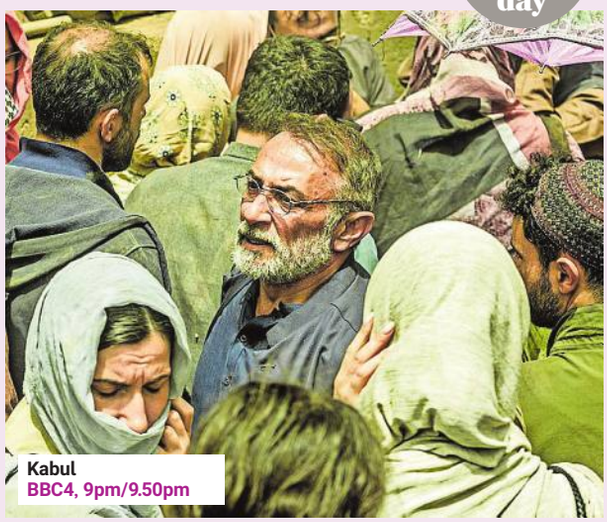
Silent Roar 15, 2023
BBC2, 11.05pm

Louis McCartney, who starred in the West End production *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*, made his big screen debut in this whimsical coming-of-age drama set on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, written and directed by the Skye-born film-maker Johnny Barrington. McCartney plays Dondo, a young surfer mourning the loss of his father at sea, who has a crush on student Sas (Ella Lily Hyland). But the arrival of a charismatic church minister (played by the RSC's Mark Lockyer) on the island turns Dondo's life upside down. (90min)

● Previews by Kevin Maher, Ed Potton, Wendy Ide, Joe Clay

Saturday 15

★ Picks of the day



Kabul
BBC4, 9pm/9.50pm

A fight for survival in Afghanistan

This heart-thumping six-part thriller, which turns the chaotic 2021 evacuation of Afghanistan into nail-biting prestige television, gets its scheduled TV broadcast (it has been on iPlayer). Co-directed by Kasia Adamik and Olga Chajdas, the drama unfolds across a claustrophobic, sun-baked city unravelling in real time as Taliban forces close in and western embassies scramble for the exit. At its emotional core is the Nazany family — led by Zahara (Darina Al Joundi) and her husband, Baqir (Vassilis Koukalani) — whose plight is set against the scrambling of foreign operatives, played by Eric Dane and Jonathan Zaccai. Raw, powerful and quietly devastating. All human life is here. Ben Dowell

Concorde: Days That Shocked the World Channel 4, 10pm

Hurtling at more than twice the speed of sound, Concorde was the ultimate 20th-century status symbol, slashing transatlantic flight times to three and a half hours and serving as a powerful emblem of Anglo-French co-operation. The illusion was shattered on July 25, 2000, when Air France Flight 4590 burst into flames shortly after taking off from Paris, killing the 109 people on board and four on the ground. This solemn, meticulously assembled documentary examines the tragedy by blending poignant testimony from loved ones with painstaking forensic detail, including a focus on the work of the investigators sifting through the wreckage. The film builds to reveal the devastatingly mundane cause of the crash, which may not be fresh news but it's a powerful disclosure nonetheless. **BD**

Air France Flight 4590 seen with fire trailing from its engine

Celebrating Graceland at the Proms BBC2, 7.30pm

When Paul Simon recorded his *Graceland* album he had some rather un-diamond-studded headlines: it was recorded in South Africa, and he had breached the UN cultural boycott against the apartheid regime. Forty years on, the controversy is largely forgotten as Clive Myrie hosts a joyful celebration at the Albert Hall. Ladysmith Black Mambazo, James Bay and Laura Mvula deliver reimaginings of *You Can Call Me Al* and *The Boy in the Bubble*. **BD**

TOTP: Big Hits 2003 BBC2, 8.30pm

This fun celebration of a genre-busting *Top of the Pops* year includes Beyoncé's solo debut (*Crazy in Love*), Justin Timberlake performing in a dolphin suit with the Flaming Lips, and the Darkness bringing high-camp rock to the masses. This is followed by *TOTP: The Story of 2003* (9.30pm), in which Matt Willis (Busted), Kimberley Walsh (Girls Aloud) and Pete Doherty (the Libertines) chronicle a chaotic year. **BD**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
10.00 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026 Jeanette Kwakye presents coverage of the opening session on day six from Alexander Stadium
1.30 pm BBC News; Weather
1.45 Bargain Hunt (r)
2.30 FILM **Chicken Run (U, 2000)** Animated comedy with the voices of Mel Gibson, Julia Sawalha and Jane Horrocks
3.50 Escape to the Country (r)
4.35 Garden Rescue (r)
5.20 BBC News Headlines
5.30 BBC Regional News; Weather
5.45 The Hit List Best friends, a married couple and a father and son-in-law take part
6.30 Alan Carr's Picture Slam With contestants from Stoke-on-Trent, London and Leeds

Mission: Impossible (10.20pm)

7.15 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026 Gabby Logan presents coverage of the evening session on day six, including the men's and women's 4x100m finals. It was Great Britain who took the honours in the women's race two years ago in Rome, and the host nation were victorious in the men's event. It will also be hoped that Katarina Johnson Thompson can win a medal in the heptathlon, which concludes with the 800m, and Jake Wightman will be quietly confident in the 1500m. Medals are also awarded in the women's high jump and 400m, and the men's javelin, triple jump and 10,000m

10.00 BBC News; Weather

10.20 FILM **Mission: Impossible (PG, 1996)** Secret agents suspect there is a traitor in their organisation when their latest assignment ends in disaster. The sole survivor is accused of being the mole, forcing him to go on the run to clear his name. However, in the process, he discovers a former Russian spy is selling information about the world's leading undercover operatives. Action thriller based on the 1960s television series starring Tom Cruise, Jon Voight and Ving Rhames

12.05 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.10 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.05 am Piripenguins (r)
6.15 Big Lizard (r)
6.25 The Weasy Family (r)
6.30 Grizzy and the Lemmings (r)
6.40 Duck and Frog (r)
6.45 Pokémon Horizons (r)
7.10 Winx Club (r) **7.35 The Next Step: Cheer** (r) **8.00 Malory Towers** (r) **8.25 Newsround**
8.30 Gardeners' World (r)
9.30 Beechgrove Garden
10.00 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites
11.30 Big Irish Food Tour (r)
12.00 pm Lorraine Pascale: How to Be a Better Cook (r)
12.30 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
1.30 Live Gymnastics: European Championships 2026 The third and penultimate day of the women's event in Croatia
5.30 FILM **Superman III (PG, 1983)** Comic-book adventure sequel starring Christopher Reeve

Beyoncé in 2003 (8.30pm/9.30pm)

7.30 Celebrating Graceland at the Proms A concert at the Royal Albert Hall marking the 40th anniversary of Paul Simon's album, featuring Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Laura Mvula. **See Pick of the Day**

8.30 TOTP: Big Hits 2003 Featuring appearances by Beyoncé, Sugababes, Coldplay, Outkast, Girls Aloud, the Flaming Lips, Panjabi MC, the Darkness, Mis-Teeq and Madonna. **See Pick of the Day**

9.30 TOTP: The Story of 2003 Mel Giedroyc narrates a musical review of the year, with contributions from Matt Willis and Charlie Simpson of Busted and Justin Hawkins. **See Pick of the Day**

10.30 Beyoncé at the BBC The singer's appearances on BBC programmes (r)

11.00 Sugababes at Glastonbury 2024 The pop trio's performance on the West Holts stage (r)

11.40 FILM **The Graduate (12, 1967)** A naive college graduate is seduced by a middle-aged woman, only to fall in love with her daughter. Comedy drama starring Dustin Hoffman and Anne Bancroft

1.25 -2.25am Sign Zone: Who Do You Think You Are? (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am James Martin's French Adventure Visiting Paris (r)
6.30 James Martin's American Adventure Fort Worth (r)
7.30 Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh Talk show (r)
9.25 ITV News Updates
9.30 ITV Racing: The Opening Show With Rishi Persad
10.30 James Martin's Saturday Morning With Josie Gibson (r)
1.00 pm ITV News; Weather
1.15 Live ITV Racing: From Newbury Oli Bell presents coverage from Newbury, where the Hungerford Stakes is the feature race, plus racing from Newmarket and Ripon
4.00 FILM **Moonraker (PG, 1979)** James Bond spy adventure starring Roger Moore
6.30 ITV News; Weather
6.45 Regional News; Weather

Daniel Craig stars in Skyfall (8pm)

7.00 Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special Stephen Mulhern hosts as comedian Joe Lycett tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the Banker for the chance to win a cash prize for charity

8.00 FILM **Skyfall (12, 2012)** James Bond pursues a mysterious criminal mastermind who has orchestrated a terrorist attack on MI6 headquarters and exposed the identities of undercover agents around the world. The trail leads to a rogue former operative who has a personal vendetta against the intelligence organisation's leader M — who is also facing calls to retire. Action thriller starring Daniel Craig as 007, with Javier Bardem, Judi Dench, Ralph Fiennes and Naomie Harris

10.40 ITV News

11.00 The Staircase It is 2004 and Michael and his family struggle with the court's decision, while Jean and his producer Denis clash over whose side of the story they are telling (5/8)

12.10 am English Football League Highlights The opening round
1.30 Shop on TV
3.00 Cold Case Forensics (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Fern Britton: Inside the Vet's Fern meets a cockapoo (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.15** The Repair Shop on the Road. At Alloa Co-op Bowling Club (r)

8.00 The Town That Floored the World. How Kirkcaldy became the world centre for linoleum (r) **9.00** Murder Trial: Death of a Dog Walker. A former gamekeeper is accused of the murder of a colleague (r) **10.00** The Fringe, Fame and Me (r)

11.30pm-Midnight Jules and Greg's Wild Swim. Julie Wilson Nimmo and Greg Hemphill share their passion for wild swimming, in Glasgow and Edinburgh (r)
STV 9.30-10.30am STV Racing: The Opening Show. A preview of today's racing

Your seven-day radio listings guide
Pages 42-43

The drama Cherie on Top imagines Cherie Blair becoming Labour leader
Today, Radio 4, 3pm

Channel 4

6.05 am Cheers Comedy (r)
7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.55 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.25 The Simpsons (r)
1.55 pm Four in a Bed The first stop is The Earlsdale in Devon (r)
2.25 Four in a Bed The second visit of the week is to The Kings Arms in Bude, Cornwall (r)
2.55 Four in a Bed From the East Creek B&B in Dorset (r)
3.25 Four in a Bed The final visit of the week is to The Railway Ramblers' Rest in Devon (r)
3.55 Four in a Bed Payment day (r)
4.30 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces A family of set designers create a dystopian themed glamping site (r)
5.30 Grand Designs A couple build a home out of stone and zinc in West Yorkshire (r)
6.30 Channel 4 News

Dictator: The Hitler Interviews (9pm)

7.00 Sandi Toksvig's Hidden Wonders Sandi and Raksha join the dig at the site of Cookham Abbey, as a team uncover new evidence of early medieval monastic life in eighth-century Britain (2/4) (r)

8.00 Bettany Hughes' Lost Worlds: Dawn of Civilisations Bettany travels to Gordion, and visits the Neolithic sites of Karahantepe and Göbeklitepe, which offer a glimpse into the dawn of civilisation (2/2)

9.00 Dictator: The Hitler Interviews Personal testimonies of those who met and knew Adolf Hitler, concluding with recollections of how he led Germany to defeat and disaster in the Second World War (3/3)

10.00 Concorde Crash: Days that Shocked the World In 2000, a Concorde crashed a minute after taking off. Investigators describe how the evidence led them to a shocking conclusion. **See Pick of the Day**

11.00 FILM The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent (15, 2022) Nicolas Cage accepts a $1 million offer to attend a fan's birthday, only to end up recruited by the CIA. Comedy starring Cage as himself

1.00 am FILM Monos (15, 2019)
2.45 Ramsay's Hotel Hell (r) (SL)
3.35 Location, Location, Location House-hunting in London (r)
4.30 Kirstie's House of Craft (r)
4.40 The Simpsons (r)
5.50 Cheers Comedy (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.05 Entertainment News on 5
9.20 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun A tapas tour (r)
9.50 Secrets of the Royal Palaces Tales of palace retreats (r)
10.45 Yorkshire's Poshest Hotel: Grantley Hall Double bill (r)
12.40 pm The Royals: Uncensored
1.40 Coastal Adventures with Helen, Jules & JB (r)
3.35 The Yorkshire Vet: A Decade in the Moors & Dales Celebrating 10 years of the series with a look back at classic stories (r)
5.00 Ken Dodd: 60 Years of Laughter A celebration of the comedian, who was embraced by the emerging television age, while always keeping alive the old-school comedy of the music hall (r)
6.55 5 News Weekend

Chichester Cathedral (7pm)

7.00 Sussex: Jewel of the South Coast The restoration of the Prince Regent's piano at Brighton's Royal Pavilion, while 300 dedicated volunteers preserve centuries of heritage at Chichester Cathedral (4/5)

8.00 Princess Anne: Royal Rule Breaker Profile of the Princess Royal, hearing from those who worked for her and witnessed her special work ethic up close. Historians analyse Anne's early years and how an independent childhood may have formed her no-nonsense attitude (r)

9.30 Royal Heirs and Spares: Rivalry & Resentment Documentary exploring the rivalries between royal heirs and their siblings, tracing the evolving dynamic between those born into unequal destinies from the early 20th century to today (r)

11.05 When Live TV Goes Horribly Wrong Richard Arnold narrates a rundown of live television's greatest fails, from technical trouble and inappropriate behaviour, to fistfights and collapsing sets (r)

1.00 am Cruise TV (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Around the World in First Class (r) **3.45 Friends** (r)
4.35 Cruising with Susan Calman (r) **5.25 Entertainment News**
5.35 Children's Shows

1.15-4.00pm Live STV Racing: Live from Newbury. Oli Bell presents coverage from Newbury, where the Hungerford Stakes is the feature race, plus racing from Newmarket, and the Great St Wilfrid Handicap from Ripon **1.30-3.00am** Shop **3.50-5.05am** Unwind with STV. Relaxation **S4C 5.00pm** Live Sgorio: Caernarfon Town v Colwyn Bay (Kick-off **5.15**) **7.15** News **7.30** Ciao! Colleen Ag Owain (r) **8.00** Sioe Môn 2026. Highlights (r) **9.00** Y Crwydryn (r) **10.40** Sgrap (r) **11.15-11.50** Stiwdio24/7 (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Africa's Lion Kings: Natural World
7.05 Life on Earth How the lineage of mammals can be traced back almost 200 million years (9/13)
8.00 Voyages of Discovery Paul Rose recounts the rescue of the *USS Squalus* crew in 1939. Last in the series
9.00 Kabul New series. Afghanistan War drama starring Shervin Alenabi. **See Pick of the Day** (1/6)
9.50 Kabul Zahara and Fazal go on the run, while Amina is torn about fleeing. **See Pick of the Day** (2/6)
10.45 To the Manor Born Audrey leaves Grantleigh Manor
11.15 Keeping Up Appearances
11.45-12.45am Bouffants, Beehives and Bobs: The Hairdos that Made Britain Iconic haircuts (S13, ep3)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.25 pm The Darling Buds of May The twins abscond from school (S3, ep2)
2.35 Midsomer Murders Barnaby investigates the world of Midsomer Priory when a nun is found strangled (S14, ep7)
4.30 Midsomer Murders The president of an ornithological society is killed (S14, ep8)
6.20 Midsomer Murders Barnaby investigates reports of a headless horseman (S15, ep1)
8.20 Midsomer Murders A barrister is killed with a lethal dose of morphine and suspicion falls on an ex-convict who has recently returned to the village (S15, ep2)
10.15-12.05am Vera Two people are murdered at a remote country house, and a connection emerges between the victims

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm Doctor Who
8.40 Ghosts US New series. The ghosts try to extricate Jay from his deal with the Devil
9.00 Ghosts US
9.20 Ghosts US
9.40 Ghosts US
10.00 Mrs Brown's Boys
11.00 Nighty Night
12.00-12.25am Schitt's Creek

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

6.05-8.15am Live International Rugby Union
11.30am-2.45pm Live EFL: Notts County v Leicester City (Kick-off **12.00**); **Sheffield United v Birmingham City** (kick-off **5.30**)
8.00 Live PGA Tour Golf The FedEx St Jude Championship
11.00pm-4.00am Live Tennis

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm Discovering: Jean Simmons Profile of the actress
3.00 FILM Blue Road: The Edna O'Brien Story (12, 2024) The Irish novelist reflects on her life and career
5.00 Voices of the Valleys
6.00 Classic Albums Elton John's *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*
7.00 Classic Albums The making of Phil Collins' first solo album *Face Value*
8.00 The Genesis Songbook Members of the band choose favourite songs from their back catalogue
9.15 John & Yoko: Above Us Only Sky The story of John Lennon's album *Imagine*, released in 1971
11.15-1.05am FILM Pauline Black: A 2-Tone Story (15, 2024) Tracing the Selecter frontwoman's career in music

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

2.00 pm Live Formula E Race one of the London E-Prix, held at ExCeL London Circuit (Start-time **3.05**)
4.35 Great Racehorses
5.00 Aussie Pickers Lucas Callaghan and Adam McDonald travel to Melbourne
6.00 Aussie Pickers Lucas and Adam visit Tasmania
7.00 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole and Pete Thorne hop on their bikes for a road trip to Exmouth in Devon
8.00 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole and the team head into the final stage of building and testing the landspeed record bike
9.00 English Football League Highlights The opening round of fixtures, including Mlddlesbrough v Lincoln City
10.30-12.30am All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

6.45pm FILM Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (12, 2005) Comedy sequel with Sandra Bullock
9.00-12.25am FILM The Batman (15, 2022) A masked terrorist starts murdering seemingly innocent people. Comic-book drama starring Robert Pattinson

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

7.00am Live Snooker China Open The semi-finals
10.30-12.15pm Live Formula E World Championship
12.30-4.00 Live Snooker China Open The semi-finals
7.15-10.00 Live MLB: Chicago Cubs v St Louis Cardinals (Start-time **7.20**)
12.00m't-6.00am Live UFC

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm A Place in the Sun Costa Blanca
2.40 Come Dine with Me
5.20 Four in a Bed The competition kicks off at Manor House Inn in Haltwhistle
5.55 Four in a Bed A visit to Orchard Glamping in Lancashire
6.25 Four in a Bed The third visit of the week is to Hotel Ellenby in Scarborough
6.55 Four in a Bed The last visit is to The Crown Inn in Derbyshire
7.30 Four in a Bed The winner is announced
8.00 Griff's Canadian Adventure Comedian Griff Rhys Jones travels across Canada
9.00 24 Hours in A&E A 40-year-old man is rushed in after losing control of his car
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A couple are brought in after a road accident
11.05-12.05am 999: On the Front Line

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.40 pm Father Brown A murderer uses Kembleford's model village to plan their attacks (S10, ep1)
2.40 New Tricks (2/2) Gerry fights to clear his name (S12, ep2)
3.40 New Tricks The team looks into the murder of a vicar (S12, ep3)
5.00 Darby and Joan Two strangers embark on an epic odyssey in the Australian outback (S1, ep1)
6.00 Darby and Joan The duo investigate a theft at a banana farm (S1, ep2)
7.00 The Brokenwood Mysteries Two murders are committed at the wine show (S1, ep2)
9.00 Wallander Two teenage girls confess to killing a taxi driver (S1, ep2)
11.00 Outrageous (6/6)
12.00-1.35am The Last Detective (S4, ep2)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics The team fall for a Subaru Pick-up
8.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
9.00 Bangers & Cash
10.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
11.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.30pm House of the Dragon Fantasy prequel (S3, ep7)
7.40 House of the Dragon Last in the series (S3, ep8)
9.00 Possession Oliver becomes unexpectedly violent at Hope Hill (3/5)
10.00 Possession (4/5)
11.00-12.05am All Her Fault A betrayal is uncovered (5/8)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.05 pm The Enemy Below (PG, 1957) Second World War thriller with Robert Mitchum and Curt Jürgens
3.05 Secret Headquarters (PG, 2022) Comedy adventure starring Owen Wilson
5.10 Flamin' Hot (12, 2023) Comedy drama starring Jesse Garcia
7.05 See How They Run (12, 2022) A weary inspector and his eager young sidekick investigate a murder at a theatre. Mystery with Sam Rockwell and Saoirse Ronan
9.00 Angel Has Fallen (15, 2019) A secret service agent is framed for an assassination attempt on the President, and races to clear his name. Action thriller starring Gerard Butler
11.20-1.10am Monolith (15, 2023) Thriller starring Lily Sullivan

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.20 pm FILM The Four Feathers (U, 1939) Period adventure with John Clements
3.35 Whiplash Cobb goes in search of a source of water in the desert
4.10 FILM Gift Horse (PG, 1952) Second World War adventure with Trevor Howard
6.25 Dick Turpin Glutton needs Turpin's help to recover an incriminating letter
7.00 Maigret The detective investigates the murder of a small-time pimp
8.00 The Duchess of Duke Street Louisa realises the hotel could be harbouring a traitor
9.05 Francis Durbridge's Melissa Guy sets a trap for the killer
10.10 FILM Turn the Key Softly (PG, 1953) Drama starring Joan Collins and Kathleen Harrison
11.45-12.20am Eurotrash

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.20pm Inside Japan's War
7.25 Inside Japan's War
8.35 Peleliu: WWII's Most Well-Preserved Battlefield
9.45 1945: The Savage Peace Violence toward Germans
10.55 Battle of Okinawa in Colour The fight for Okinawa
12.00-1.05am Fall of Japan in Colour Documentary

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

7.00pm Rik Mayall: Magnificent B'stard A tribute to the influential comedian
9.00 God Bless Ozzy Osbourne A profile of the Black Sabbath frontman
11.00-1.00am Pete Doherty: Stranger in My Own Skin Documentary about the Libertines co-frontman

Sunday 16

★ Picks of the day

Sunny Nights
ITV1, 10.15pm

American siblings find trouble down under

Will Forte and D'Arcy Carden, *above*, have starred in two of the most addictive comedies of recent years — *The Four Seasons* and *The Good Place*. Now they are teaming up to play siblings, Martin and Vicki, haplessly launching a doomed spray tan start-up. Convinced the streets of Australia are paved with gold, the American pair board a plane to Sydney. Before they can find customers, Martin has a one-night stand that leaves him open to blackmail from some gangsters. Guns are waved, bad decisions are made, and uptight Martin is left panicking. His reckless sister starts calling the shots, and soon their lives turn into a Guy Ritchie movie as they dodge the baddies and wonder how on earth they ended up in this mess. Emma Bullimore

25 Years in Afghanistan
ITV1, 11.15pm

In this turbulent world, international attention has shifted away from Afghanistan and the plight of its people. The original version of this 2021 film won a Bafta for showing what life was like for Mir, a cheeky seven-year-old largely unaware of the challenges he faced — "I knew nothing of... Bin Laden. I just knew I was living in a cave and it was quite good fun." We followed Mir from 2002-21 as he became a successful cameraman, husband and father — now there is another chapter of the story. Mir reveals how things have changed under Taliban rule, as he and his wife struggle to find work and food. The couple have recently welcomed a daughter, but as a girl she is set to have a very different life to that of her four brothers. **EB**

An update on Mir, now a married father of four, in Afghanistan

Debuts at the Proms
BBC4, 9pm

Katie Derham's latest compilation is not, as you might expect, made up of first glimpses of star soloists — although it does include the American soprano Angel Blue's Last Night gig in 2024. There are also debuts by a composer (Betsy Jolas, with a piece inspired by *The Tempest*), an orchestra (the Spanish National Orchestra) and an instrument — the accordion, played by Ksenija Sidorova in a rendition of a Piazzolla tango. **EB**

Richard E Grant's Very Modern Odyssey
Channel 4, 8pm

The actor's agreeable Mediterranean holiday (with an occasional, undemanding *Odyssey* theme) has so far taken him to Turkey, Malta and Sicily. In his third instalment he's on Djerba, a Tunisian island, enjoying its markets, sampling crafts, fishing — oh, and remembering he's supposed to be looking for the inspiration for Homer's lotus fruit. Later he heads to mainland Italy and a possible home of the witch Circe. **EB**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
7.25 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026 Coverage of the opening session on day seven, featuring the men's and women's marathons
10.35 FILM Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile (PG, 2022) Musical comedy starring Javier Bardem
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News; Weather
1.15 Songs of Praise
1.50 Money for Nothing (r)
2.35 Escape to the Country (r)
3.05 The Mating Game (r)
4.05 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
5.05 BBC News Headlines
5.20 BBC Regional News; Weather
5.30 Countryfile Adam Henson meets a young farmer and her flock of goats in Cumbria
6.30 Antiques Roadshow (r)

Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile (10.35am)

7.30 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026 Gabby Logan presents coverage of the evening session on the seventh and final day from Alexander Stadium. Recently crowned Commonwealth 800m champion Georgia Hunter-Bell and two-time winner of the race Laura Muir will hope to be contenders for Great Britain in the 1500m. There is also relay action, with the men's and women's 4x400m and mixed 4x100m taking place. Plus, the finals of the men's pole vault and 3,000m steeplechase, and the women's javelin and long jump
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.25 BBC Regional News
10.30 FILM Mission: Impossible 2 (15, 2000) Secret agent Ethan Hunt is sent to find and destroy the only sample of a deadly man-made virus. However, he faces tough opposition in a former spy-turned-criminal mastermind who has already acquired the cure and now wants the pathogen itself. Director John Woo's action thriller sequel starring Tom Cruise, Dougray Scott, Thandiwe Newton and Anthony Hopkins
12.25 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
12.30 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.25 am Countryfile (r)
7.25 Breakfast The latest news
9.00 Prayer and Reflection (r)
9.30 FILM Top Hat (U, 1935) Musical starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers (b/w)
11.05 The Best Dishes Ever (r)
11.35 The Great British Sewing Bee The wide world of sport (r)
12.35 pm FILM Superman IV: The Quest for Peace (PG, 1987) The Man of Steel vows to rid the world of nuclear weapons, only to face a radioactive villain. Superhero adventure sequel with Christopher Reeve
2.00 Live Cricket: The Hundred The women's final (Start-time **2.15**). Coverage of the showpiece match between the Eliminator winners and the team that topped the round-robin stage, held at Lord's

Fred Astaire in Top Hat (9.30am)

6.00 Live Cricket: The Hundred The men's final (Start-time **6.00**). Coverage of the showpiece match between the winners of the Eliminator and the team that finished top of the table, held at Lord's. MI London, then known as Oval Invincibles, were the victorious team last year, overcoming Trent Rockets by 26 runs with the help of bowling figures of 3/25 from Nathan Sowter
9.30 QI Ed Byrne, Cally Beaton and Jack Dee join regular Alan Davies on the comedy quiz (r)
10.00 FILM The French Connection (18, 1971) Two New York cops use unorthodox methods to break an international drug ring smuggling heroin into the US from France. Oscar-winning fact-based thriller, starring Gene Hackman, Roy Scheider, Fernando Rey and Tony Lo Bianco
11.40 FILM Bonnie and Clyde (18, 1967) Fact-based gangster drama about the couple who went on a crime spree across the American midwest during the 1930s. Starring Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway
1.30 -2.00am Sign Zone: Ann Droid Sue goes camping (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am James Martin's American Adventure A trip to Dallas (r)
7.00 James Martin's Saturday Morning With Josie Gibson (r)
9.25 ITV News Updates
9.30 Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh Talk show (r)
11.30 Fern Britton: Inside the Vet's
12.30 pm Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy Italy's mountains (r)
1.00 ITV News; Weather
1.05 Force of Nature (r)
2.10 FILM Octopussy (PG, 1983) James Bond investigates the mysterious death of a fellow agent in East Berlin. Spy adventure with Roger Moore
4.45 The Chase Celebrity Special Hosted by Bradley Walsh (r)
5.45 The Chase Around the World The teams land in Zurich (r)
6.40 ITV News; Weather
6.50 Regional News; Weather

Marc Warren is Van der Valk (8pm)

7.00 Force of Nature A look at how animals adapted to the cold are struggling in a warming world, including a snow leopard in the Himalayas forced from his home by a rival male (4/6)
8.00 Van der Valk When a scientist researching a potential breakthrough in the treatment of cancer is found dead, seemingly assassinated by a professional killer, Piet has to discover why he was killed and what the possible link is to pharmaceuticals billionaire Freddie Klink. Realising that the scientist possibly hid a breakthrough discovery, the team must crack a cryptic code to retrieve it (3/3)
10.00 ITV News
10.15 Sunny Nights New series. ★ American sibling entrepreneurs are dragged into the Sydney underworld. Australian comedy drama with Will Forte and D'Arcy Carden. **See Pick of the Day** (1/8)
11.15 25 Years in Afghanistan ★ Revisiting the subject of *My Childhood, My Country — 20 Years in Afghanistan*. **See Pick of the Day**
1.05 am Shop on TV
3.00 Inside Iran: War & Revolution A look at the impact of protests and military conflict on Iranian citizens (r) (SL)
4.10 Unwind with ITV
5.10 Motorsport UK (r)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.15** The Repair Shop on the Road. Restoring a memorial to lives lost at sea (r) **8.00** Island Crossings. Bad weather puts Kerrera island's annual triathlon at risk of being cancelled. Last in the series (r) **9.00** Paramedics on Scene. The Special Operations Response Team deals with the aftermath of a brawl **10.00** Still Game (r) **10.30** Scot Squad. Singh and McKirdy pull over two celebrated children's entertainers (r) **11.00** Edinburgh Unlocked. The best of the Edinburgh Festival (r) **11.30pm-12.00** Style Fixers. Jamie Grandison helps a woman realise her influencer chic fantasy (r)

The best of the week's live sport

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Erling Haaland and Manchester City take on Arsenal in the Community Shield
TNT Sports 1, k/o 3pm

Channel 4

6.20 am Cheers Comedy (r)
7.40 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
8.30 The Simpsons (r)
10.00 Sunday Brunch With guests Al Murray, Layton Williams, Danny O'Donoghue, Gareth Malone and Saffron Hocking
1.00 pm The Dog House (r)
2.00 Four in a Bed The first venue is the Plough Inn in Ripple (r)
2.35 Four in a Bed Next up is The Old Crown Coaching Inn (r)
3.05 Four in a Bed The Courthouse in Great Bromley, Essex (r)
3.35 Four in a Bed The final visit is to Samsara Retreat in Kent (r)
4.05 Four in a Bed Payment day (r)
4.35 Our Farm Next Door: Amanda, Clive and Kids (r)
5.35 Worst House on the Street Scarlette and Stuart face one of their biggest challenges (r)
6.30 Channel 4 News

Richard E Grant's odyssey (8pm)

7.00 Gogglebox Compilation of highlights from series 27, in which the Goggleboxers check out more of the biggest and best television

8.00 Richard E Grant's Very Modern Odyssey Richard searches for the mythical hypnotic lotus fruit in Tunisia and seeks out the enchantress Circe on Italy's west coast. **See Pick of the Day** (3/4)

9.00 The Piano The wildcard pick is revealed and Mika, Claudia Winkleman and Jon Batiste prepare the finalists for the biggest concert of their lives at Birmingham Symphony Hall

10.00 Celebrity Gogglebox Stars give their thoughts on *Casualty*, *The 1% Club for Soccer Aid*, *Clarkson's Farm*, *Heretic*, *The Yorkshire Vet: At Home with the Greens* and *This Morning* (r)

11.05 FILM Alice, Darling (15, 2022) A young woman trapped in an abusive relationship becomes the unwitting participant in an intervention staged by her two closest friends. Thriller starring Anna Kendrick

12.45 am Hotel Hell (r) **1.35 Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives** (r) (SL) **2.25 Couples Come Dine with Me** (r) **3.20 Levison Wood: Walking with Lions** (r) **4.15 Fur Babies** (r) **5.10 The Dog House** (r) **5.50 Countdown** (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.05 Entertainment News on 5
9.15 FILM The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (U, 2004) Children's animated comedy with the voice of Tom Kenny
11.00 Happy Campers: The Caravan Park Two editions (r)
1.00 pm Cruising with Susan Calman Double bill (r)
3.00 Croc Watch with Steve Backshall The naturalist gets up close with crocodiles (r)
4.00 Croc Watch with Steve Backshall Steve comes face to face with a living legend — the world's oldest crocodile (r)
5.00 Sicily with Michael Portillo The broadcaster explores the Italian island's capital Palermo, investigating Sicily's links to the Mafia (r)
6.25 5 News Weekend

A classic sitcom remembered (6.30pm)

6.30 Birds of a Feather: 30 Years of Laughs A celebration of the sitcom, revisiting memorable moments and looking behind the scenes, featuring insight from stars including Lesley Joseph and Linda Robson (r)

8.00 Dogs Behaving (Very) Badly In Cheltenham, Graeme Hall meets a labrador and a poodle cross who make focusing on driving virtually impossible for their owners (r)

9.00 Inside the Four Seasons: Park Lane The director of engineering begins the Presidential Suite refresh, with his team installing bespoke fabrics and furniture (3/5)

10.00 When Caravan Holidays Go Horribly Wrong Accounts of disastrous caravan vacations, including a grizzly bear incursion in Canada, a family who waded through knee-deep torrent of rain to get to their static in Cornwall, and a caravan that detached itself from a car and went hurtling down a motorway (3/5) (r)

11.30 Britain's Worst Weather Disasters Extreme weather events in the UK (1/2) (r)

1.00 am Cruise TV (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Tom Read Wilson's Grand Tour (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.35 Cruising with Susan Calman (r) (SL) **5.25 Entertainment News 5.35 Children's Shows**

BBC2 N Ireland 10.00pm Neil Martin: Bóthar an Cheoil. Composer Neil Martin's collaborations with artists and friends (r) **11.20-11.40pm** Barra on the Foyle. Barra Best travels along the Foyle river network (r) **STV 1.05-3.00am** Shop **4.10-5.10am** Unwind

S4C 5.40pm Cefn Gwlad (r) **6.40** Pobol y Cwm Omnibws **7.45** News **8.00** Sioe Môn 2026 (r) **9.00** Cynefin. A visit to the small village of Beddgelert in Snowdonia (r) **10.00** Y Babell Lên 2026 (r) **10.30** Y Babell Lên 2026 (r) **11.00-11.35** Cymoedd Roy Noble (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm The Best of Bill Oddie Goes Wild Highlights of the wildlife show
7.30 Birding with Bill Oddie Bill revisits his childhood haunts
8.00 Bill Oddie's Top Ten Birds Bill counts down the UK's 10 most-loved and 10 most-hated birds
9.00 Debuts at the Proms A celebration of moments that made Proms history. **See Pick of the Day**
9.55 Black Watch A 2007 performance of the National Theatre of Scotland's production of Gregory Burke's play, based on interviews with former soldiers who served in Iraq. Brian Ferguson stars
11.30-12.30am Black Watch: A Soldier's Story Examining the National Theatre of Scotland's play

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

12.00 noon Agatha Christie's Poirot The sleuth investigates a bizarre series of deaths (S4, ep1)
2.15 pm Midsomer Murders An astronomer is killed during a total eclipse of the sun (S15, ep3)
4.10 Midsomer Murders Barnaby investigates murders echoing the plots of horror films (S15, ep4)
6.05 Midsomer Murders Members of a chess club are targeted by a killer (S15, ep5)
8.00 Midsomer Murders A dairy worker is crushed to death by a giant round of cheese (S15, ep6)
10.00 Vera A fisherman's body is found tangled up in a trawler's net
11.50-12.55am Wycliffe A prostitute's client confesses to murder before vanishing into the night (S5, ep2)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm EastEnders
9.00 Vigil A detective investigates a suspicious death on a nuclear submarine
10.00 Vigil A feud is exposed
11.00 Vigil Mystery thriller
12.00-1.30am FILM Mothers' Instinct (15, 2024) Thriller starring Anne Hathaway and Jessica Chastain

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

12.30pm Live EFL: Watford v Southampton (Kick-off **1.30**)
3.45 Live EFL: Burnley v West Ham United (Kick-off **4.00**)
6.00 Live The Hundred The men's final (Start-time **6.00**)
9.30 Live PGA Tour Golf The FedEx St Jude Championship
11.00-4.00am Live Tennis Day four of the Cincinnati Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm Voices of the Valleys Pressure mounts on the Welsh male voice choirs
3.00 André Rieu: Power of Love A 2024 concert in the violinist's home town of Maastricht
5.00 Cirque du Soleil: Quidam Circus show in which a young girl ventures into an imaginary world
7.00 Grand Ole Opry: Opry Live With Lainey Wilson, Rhonda Vincent, Mark Wills and Sierra Hull
8.00 Discovering: Sean Connery A profile of the Scottish actor
9.00 FILM Highlander (15, 1986) Immortal warriors must fight each other in duels to the death. Fantasy adventure starring Christopher Lambert
11.10-12.25am Gene Kelly: An American in Hollywood The life of the actor and dancer

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.10 pm Sharpe The treacherous Major Brand dupes Sharpe
3.30 Live ITV Racing: Sky Bet Sunday Series Oli Bell presents coverage of the final round of the series from Pontefract, featuring seven races
7.00 Sharpe Framed by long-time enemy Ducos for stealing Napoleon's treasures, Sharpe is abandoned by his wife Jane
9.15 FILM Under Siege 2: Dark Territory (18, 1995) A Navy veteran on board a train battles hijackers who possess a weapon with the potential to trigger earthquakes. Action adventure sequel starring Steven Seagal and Eric Bogosian
11.20-12.35am The Summit Australia A raging waterfall splinters the group

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

6.40pm FILM Hairspray (PG, 2007) Musical comedy starring Nikki Blonsky, John Travolta and Michelle Pfeiffer
9.00 The Only Way Is Essex In the Albanian sunshine, friendships are tested
10.00 Olivia Attwood: The Price of Perfection
11.00-12.05am Family Guy

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

9.00-10.00am Live European Rally Championship
12.00noon-1.30pm Live Men's Cycling Pro Series
2.00-6.00 Live FA Community Shield: Arsenal v Manchester City (Kick-off **3.00**)
9.00pm-12.00m't Live MLB
12.15-3.00am Live MLB
5.15-1.30pm Live Test Cricket

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

2.00 pm A Place in the Sun Two editions
3.50 Come Dine with Me
6.20 Four in a Bed The B&B battle begins at the Mayfield Hotel in Seaburn, Sunderland
6.55 Four in a Bed From the Sutherlands Hotel in Gateshead
7.25 Four in a Bed The third stay of the week is at Brampton Dales Farm in Gainsborough
7.55 Four in a Bed The final visit of the week is to Valley View in Pendle, Lancashire
8.25 Four in a Bed The winner is announced
9.00 Surgeons: Life in Their Hands A patient undergoes marathon surgery to remove a recurrence of a rare type of cancer
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A young cyclist is sent for a CT scan after falling from her bike
11.05-12.05am 24 Hours in A&E Documentary

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

1.40 pm Call the Midwife The team rushes to the aid of the injured in the wake of a tragedy (S11, ep8)
2.40 Catherine Cookson's The Man Who Cried Feature-length drama starring Ciarán Hinds and Kate Buffery
6.00 Hetty Wainthropp Investigates A mother hires Hetty to find out who is stalking her daughter (S3, ep2)
7.00 Hetty Wainthropp Investigates Hetty searches for a gang of thugs (S3, ep3)
8.00 Sister Boniface Mysteries Sister Boniface finds herself on the hunt for a killer doll when a toymaker is stabbed to death (S3, ep2)
9.00 Silent Witness The body of a woman is found on train tracks in London (S23, ep3)
11.15-12.35am New Tricks Drama (S7, ep6)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm 1066: A Year to Conquer England
8.00 Bangers & Cash
9.00 Bangers & Cash Derek heads off to collect some vintage motorcycles
10.00 Canal Boat Diaries
11.00 Canal Boat Diaries
12.00-1.00am Canal Boat Diaries The Rochdale Canal

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.50pm The Last of Us Ellie encounters a vengeful group of survivors (S1, ep8)
7.55 The Last of Us (S1, ep9)
9.00 House of the Dragon Last in the series (S3, ep8)
10.25 Gomorrah: The Origins Gangster drama prequel (5/6)
11.30-12.35am Gomorrah: The Origins In Italian (6/6)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.50 pm Playing with Fire (PG, 2019) Comedy starring John Cena
2.45 Enemy Mine (12, 1985) Sci-fi adventure starring Dennis Quaid
4.55 The Golden Voyage of Sinbad (U, 1974) Fantasy adventure with John Phillip Law
7.05 Dog (12, 2022) US Army Ranger Briggs escorts a military working dog along America's Pacific Coast to attend the funeral of her handler. Comedy starring Channing Tatum
9.00 Missing (15, 2023) When her mother goes missing while on vacation with her new boyfriend, June searches for answers. Thriller starring Storm Reid
11.15-2.00am Kingsman: The Golden Circle (15, 2017) Comedy adventure starring Taron Egerton

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

12.50 pm FILM North West Frontier (U, 1959) Action adventure starring Lauren Bacall and Kenneth More
3.30 For the Love of Ada
4.00 The Man from UNCLE
5.00 The Footage Detectives Footage of the Southend Carnival in the 1960s
6.00 FILM The Railway Children (U, 2000) Family drama starring Jenny Agutter and Richard Attenborough
8.05 FILM The Quatermass Xperiment (PG, 1955) An astronaut returns from a failed space mission horribly changed and brings terror to the streets of London. Sci-fi horror starring Brian Donlevy
9.45 FILM Confessions of a Driving Instructor (18, 1976) Comedy with Robin Askwith
11.30-12.35am The Heritage Chart Show

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.05pm Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall The Aztecs
7.10 The Last Days of Anne Boleyn A look at the execution of Henry VIII's second wife
8.25 The Stuarts
9.35 The Stuarts
10.40 The Stuarts
12.00-1.15am The Last Days of Anne Boleyn Documentary

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm Savage Mountain The story of Kristin Harila's record-breaking climb of the world's 14 highest mountains
8.00 FILM Touching the Void (15, 2003) Documentary by director Kevin Macdonald
10.00-12.10am The Alabama Solution Documentary about the prison system in Alabama

Monday 17

★ Picks of the day

Buried with Michael Sheen
BBC2, 9pm

Conspiracy and cover-ups in Wales

Is Michael Sheen bored with acting? After signing up for *Celebrity Traitors* and succeeding Richard Osman as the new host of *House of Games*, he's presenting a two-part documentary inspired by a bout of doomscrolling. In 2017 he went down an online rabbit hole and discovered the whistleblower Douglas Gowan, a farming consultant who claimed that land in south Wales had been poisoned by toxic chemical dumping. Stunned by the allegations, Sheen got in touch with Gowan, who was terminally ill. With no time to waste, Sheen spent two days with him, learning his life story before he died in 2018, aged 74. Now, haunted by the idea of a scandal, Sheen tries to establish if he has stumbled upon a cover-up or a conspiracy. Emma Bullimore

Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace — What Happened Next
ITV1, 9pm

This *What Happened Next* episode catches up with two foundlings who appeared in the first run of Nicky Campbell and Davina McCall's spin-off series in 2024. Back then we met Susanne, who was found in a phone-box in the 1970s and approached the show after beginning to search for her birth mother in middle age. The team's efforts led to a meeting with Brian, a half-sibling. Two years on, she continues the quest for her mum that originated when, aged 12, she learnt she was adopted after finding a file of papers. The episode also features Thomas, abandoned as a baby, who was put in contact with his Irish cousin Marina in 2024. The main development since then is that a band were so inspired by his story they wrote a song about him. **John Dugdale**

Nicky Campbell and Davina McCall present Long Lost Family

Celebrity PopMaster TV
More4, 9pm

Since Ken Bruce launched the TV version of his radio quiz three years ago, new series have been heralded by one-off celebrity specials. This year's line-up is dominated by pop stars, including Kéllé Bryan from Eternal, Shaun Ryder from Happy Mondays, and Dougie Vipond from Deacon Blue. Patsy Kensit is the exception as an actress, but she fits in as a wife of four musicians and singer in the band Eighth Wonder. Series five begins on Tuesday. **JD**

Walter Presents: Everybody Lies
Channel 4, 12.05am

With a script by Olivier Norek, one of France's leading crime writers, handsomely dishevelled Vincent Elbaz in the lead role and Paris as its glorious setting, this miniseries reeks of quality. A former policeman is brought back to lead the Sensitive Cases Unit, so called because it looks into crimes committed by the rich and powerful. He conducts business from a bookstore run by a former criminal, because that's the sort of thing mavericks do. **Helen Stewart**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Countryfile Treasures (r)
10.30 Garden Rescue (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing A large bookcase and a tired cabinet
2.45 Escape to the Country A family seek a home with land for horses in Aberdeenshire
3.30 The Repair Shop Experts restore a handmade book and a camping stove (r)
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show hosted by Jason Manford
5.15 Pointless Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Nish Kumar (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Ralf Little in Death in Paradise (9pm)

7.00 The One Show With Roman Kemp and Lauren Laverne
7.30 EastEnders A situation escalates, and Avani attempts to play matchmaker
8.00 Child Maintenance: Parents Under Pressure — Panorama Krupa Padhy reports
8.30 Scam Interceptors An ethical hacker catches scammers at work on their own CCTV (r)
9.00 Death in Paradise A reggae rap artist is shot dead at a soundcheck for a concert. Things prove uncomfortable for Marlon when he discovers a personal connection to the crime. With Ralf Little (7/9) (r)
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 Have I Got News for You David Tennant Miles Jupp and Cathy Newman take part (6/10) (r)
11.10 FILM Mission: Impossible III (12, 2006) A former secret agent ends up in a struggle to save his fiancée from a ruthless arms dealer. Action thriller sequel directed by JJ Abrams with Tom Cruise, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Michelle Monaghan
1.05 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
1.10 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.45 am Beechgrove Garden (r)
7.15 The Answer Run (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: The Repair Shop A rocking horse (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games With Nina Conti (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer (r)
3.30 Serengeti II A storm looms (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow First of two editions from Renishaw Hall, Derbyshire (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Cornwall's National Maritime Museum (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Edith Bowman, Rhys James, Anita Rani and Simon Rimmer take part (r)
6.30 Bear Grylls: Wild Reckoning A couple whose marriage was pushed to the brink (r)

Victoria Coren Mitchell (8pm)

7.00 Global Eye Investigations from BBC correspondents all over the world
7.30 Mastermind Subjects include the band Iron Maiden and Hergé's *Tintin* books
8.00 Only Connect Accrual World take on the Knitwits
8.30 University Challenge Bath takes on City St George's
9.00 Buried with Michael Sheen ★ The Welsh actor investigates claims of conspiracy, complicity and denial over allegations of toxic chemical contamination in south Wales. **See Pick of the Day** (1/2)
10.00 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing Angling for perch on the River Thames (4/6) (r)
10.30 Newsnight Insights and global interviews, with Faisal Islam
11.05 Disclosure: Welcome to Glasgow Myles Bonnar investigates claims that parts of Scotland's biggest city have become no-go zones because of crime, homelessness and antisocial behaviour
12.05 am A House Through Time The successive inhabitants of an Edinburgh house (r)
1.05 Sign Zone: Countryfile Adam Henson meets young farmers in West Sussex (r) (SL)
2.00 Bergerac Drama (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.30 pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal The dealers den descends on Nottingham, where Henry Nicholls gets a grilling over a brooch collection (r)
3.00 Deal or No Deal Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of chutes in the hope of winning £10,000 (r)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show hosted by Bradley Walsh (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Prison blues: Sarah and Kacey (8.30pm)

7.30 Fletchers' Family Farm Kelvin is in the market for a bull. Last in the series (r)
8.00 Emmerdale Ruby orchestrates the theft of Jimmy's shipment
8.30 Coronation Street Sarah refuses to use her contacts to help another prisoner
9.00 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace: What Happened Next ★ A follow-up to the story of a foundling reveals further discoveries after meeting her half-brother in 2024. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 Cold Case Forensics: In the Blood Forensic scientist Angela Gallop reveals how clues in blood helped solve two crimes (3/3) (r)
11.40 The Assembly Celebrities are interviewed by neurodivergent individuals (r)
12.05 am Shop on TV
3.00 The Staircase Michael and his family struggle with the court's decision (r) (SL)
4.05 Unwind with ITV
5.10 Dickinson's Real Deal A visit to Nottingham (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 2.00pm-3.30 Sign Zone (r) **7.00** Reporting Scotland **7.30** Sportscene: SWPL Highlights **8.00** The Mountain (r) **8.30** Race Against the Tide **9.00** Interior Design Masters with Alan Carr (r) **10.00** River City **10.30** Two Doors Down (r) **11.00** Scotcast **11.30pm-Midnight** Gary: Tank Commander (r) **BBC1 Wales 9.00-10.00pm** Buried with Michael Sheen **BBC2 Wales 9.00-10.00pm** Death in Paradise (r) **BBC1 NI 10.40-11.10pm** Girl Fight (r) **BBC2 NI 10.00-10.30pm** Ar an Sliabh (r) **BBC1 Scot 9.00-10.00pm** Disclosure: Welcome to Glasgow. Claims that parts of the city are now no-go zones

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24

Aaron Pierre and Kyle Chandler star as DC heroes in Lanterns
HBO Max, out today

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway (r)
2.10 Countdown With Debbie McGee in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun A dream holiday home in or around Roquetas de Mar, Spain (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge Six couples compete to win a five-bedroom B&B in the heart of rural France (r)
5.00 Château DIY Transforming a murky pond into a gleaming water feature (r)
6.00 American Pickers A toy museum ready to sell its collection of treasures (r)

Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives (10pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Martin & Roman's Irish Road Trip Martin and Roman Kemp continue their travels in Meath and Dublin, from the Boyne Valley tombs and the Hill of Tara to the Hellfire Club ruins and Slane Castle (2/3)

9.00 Celebrity Hunted Two famous faces on the run drop in at a bar in Leeds. A social media post provokes the hunters to raid a retirement home and two fugitives pop up live on the BBC. Continues tomorrow

10.00 Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives Trewley's first rap song enjoys mixed success, and her Christmas present for her mother misfires, so she attempts to make up for it by taking her to speed dating

11.05 Surgery Secrets of the Super Rich A beauty journalist has a £9,500 nano-fat treatment to rejuvenate her under-eye shadows and a former professional footballer tackles hair loss (5/6) (r)

12.05 am Walter Presents: Everybody Lies. See Pick of the Day 1.00 Hotel Hell (r) (SL) **1.50 FILM Blue Bayou (15, 2021) 3.45 Levison Wood: Walking with Polar Bears** (r) **4.40-5.50 Hollyoaks** (r) (SL)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM An Affair to Die For (12, TVM, 2023) A woman's father becomes the obsession of her seductive room-mate, who will stop at nothing to possess him. Thriller with Ryan Francis and Meghan Carrasquillo
4.00 Castle An air marshal is murdered during a flight (r)
4.55 Love Nature A woman checks on urban badger setts (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Cyprus: Jewel of the Med A profile of the Mediterranean island, which enjoys 11 months of sunshine, and attracts four million visitors a year (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Love Nature watches badgers (4.55pm)

7.00 Traffic Cops Officers are on the lookout for a suspected cloned car, a vehicle disguised as another by copying its number plate (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Street Cops: Catching the Yobs A teen runs from a PC on the high street, as police unearth a baseball bat in the bushes. Northampton Street cops execute a warrant on a suspected drug dealer

9.00 Fare Dodgers: At War with the Law In London, investigators hunt for a woman thought to owe more than £2,300 in unpaid fares, and attempt to stop her at Chadwell Heath station to question her

10.00 Police Interceptors: Taking Down the Shoplifting Gangs Officers in Burnley go after prolific suspects, including two brothers whose campaign of shoplifting is out of control (3/4) (r)

11.05 Traffic Cops A reckless motorcyclist with a history of violence puts lives in danger as he desperately tries to outrun the cops, while a trap is set on the A1 by police targeting drug dealers (r)

12.05 am Car Pound Cops (r) **1.00 Cruise TV** (r) **2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors** (r) **2.50 Castle** (r) **3.45 Friends** (r) **4.35 Cruising with Susan Calman** (r) (SL) **5.25 Entertainment News 5.35 Children's Shows**

10.40 Death in Paradise (r) **11.40** Have I Got News for You (r) **12.10am** Sportscene: SWPL Highlights (r) **12.40** Scotcast (r) **1.10** Weather **1.15-6.00am** BBC News **STV** **11.05pm** Red Rock: STV Player Presents (r) **12.00-3.00** Shop **4.05-6.00am** Night Vision

S4C 6.00pm Arfordir Cymru: Sir Benfro (r) **6.30** Lowri Morgan: Her 333 (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Sgwrs Dan y Lloer. Elin Fflur chats to Geraint Lloyd (r) **8.25** Garddio a Mwy **8.55** News **9.00** Cefn Gwlad (r) **10.05** Y Deis (r) **10.35-11.40** Y Fets (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm The Architecture the Railways Built From London's King's Cross (S1, ep3)
7.40 The Flying Gardener Visiting Norfolk (4/5)
7.55 The Art of Spain Northern Spain's 20th-century artists. Last in the series
9.00 Mastermind The second heat of the 1977 series
9.30 Call My Bluff With André Previn and Barbara Kellerman
10.00 Art on the BBC: Michelangelo — The Good, the Bad and the Ugly How television has influenced people's understanding of the Renaissance giant (S1, ep3)
11.00 Art & Design: The Journey — Arena Examining Dadaism and surrealism
11.25-12.25am Wainwright: The Man Who Loved the Lakes Profile

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders A writers' group's secretary is killed (S1, ep2)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat A magistrate does his best to protect a young troublemaker
6.55 Heartbeat Bellamy falls in love
8.00 Midsomer Murders A killer uses ancient torture methods to punish modern-day "sinners" (S16, ep2)
10.00 Grantchester A familiar face arrives unannounced at the vicarage (S10, ep3)
11.00 Grantchester Alphy and Geordie investigate witchcraft at a foundling home (S10, ep4)
11.55-12.55am Trial & Retribution Part one of two. A friend of Chief Supt Walker is found dead (S11, ep3)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60 Norway
7.30 Deadly 60 The UK
8.00 The Great British Sewing Bee World of sport
9.00 Top Gear In Italy
10.00 Silent Witness
12.00-1.15am FILM Red Eye (12, 2005) Suspense thriller starring Cillian Murphy

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

4.00pm Live Tennis Coverage of day five of the Cincinnati Open in Mason, Ohio
7.00 Live EFL: Cardiff City v Wrexham (Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the match, held at Cardiff City Stadium
10.30pm-4.00am Live Tennis Further coverage of day five of the Cincinnati Open in Ohio

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Eighties
4.00 Discovering: Rod Steiger
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2023
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected A couple rejoice when their child is born
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A boxing manager risks his fighter's health
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A struggling writer asks a novelist for a hefty loan
8.00 André Rieu: Shall We Dance? An open-air concert in Maastricht by the Dutch violinist
11.00-12.30am Academy of Ancient Music: Vivaldi's Four Seasons A performance of Vivaldi's most popular work

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.30 pm Magnum, PI A famous French sleuth is murdered
2.35 The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes A wealthy horse owner gambles all of his money
3.45 Boon Ken becomes enchanted by two beautiful women
4.50 The Professionals CI5 goes on trial
5.55 Minder Terry watches over a house
7.00 Formula E Highlights The London E-Prix
8.00 The Motorbike Show The 1944 Triumph 3HW is put to the test
9.00 FILM Apollo 13 (PG, 1995) The crew of a lunar mission are left stranded. Fact-based drama starring Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon and Bill Paxton
11.50-1.00am Star Trek: Strange New Worlds Captain Pike is visited by his future self. Last in the series

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor
8.00 The 1% Club
9.00 The Only Way Is Essex The group's holiday in Albania continues, while Junaid proposes to Joe
10.00 Family Guy
10.30 Family Guy
11.00 Family Guy
11.30-12.05am American Dad!

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

6.30pm Live MLB: Cincinnati Reds v St Louis Cardinals (Start-time **6.40**)
9.30 MLB Plays of the Week
10.00 European Rally Championship Highlights
10.30 CPL Highlights
11.00pm-1.00am Snooker
5.15am-1.30pm Live Test Cricket: Sri Lanka v India

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me In Edinburgh
3.20 Four in a Bed Back-to-back editions
5.50 Car S.O.S. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a Jaguar Mk2
6.50 Car S.O.S. Fuzz and Tim secretly restore a classic 1960s Mercedes
7.55 Grand Designs A couple from the Wirral plan to completely transform a bungalow
9.00 Celebrity PopMaster TV Carol Decker, Dougie Vipond, Patsy Kensit, Kéllé Bryan and Shaun Ryder take part in the quiz. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 24 Hours in A&E The stories of patients who are facing adversity head-on
11.05-12.05am 24 Hours in A&E A man sustains a head wound during a 10-foot fall

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Classic Neighbours
2.30 Classic Neighbours
3.00 Whitstable Pearl Thriller (S2, ep1)
4.05 Lovejoy (S6, ep7)
5.20 As Time Goes By Romance (S2, ep7)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S5, ep5)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S5, ep6)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Part two of two. Compo takes to the air (S5, ep7)
8.00 The Brokenwood Mysteries A man dies shortly after an altercation with his neighbour (S4, ep3)
10.00 New Tricks The murder of a fashion designer is reinvestigated. Rupert Graves guest stars (S7, ep6)
11.20-12.40am Luther The maverick cop searches for a copycat killer. Idris Elba stars (S3, ep1)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Blue Planet
8.00 Canal Boat Diaries
8.30 Canal Boat Diaries
9.00 Canal Boat Diaries In Woodseaves Cutting
9.30 Canal Boat Diaries
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.45pm House of the Dragon Alicent tracks Aegon (S1, ep9)
7.50 House of the Dragon Fantasy drama (S1, ep10)
9.00 FILM Promising Young Woman (15, 2020) Crime thriller with Carey Mulligan
11.00 Possession (3/5)
11.55-12.50am Possession Claudia seeks help (4/5)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.40 pm The Comancheros (PG, 1961) Western starring John Wayne
2.50 Man in the Saddle (U, 1951) Western with Randolph Scott
4.35 Charade (PG, 1963) Romantic thriller with Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant
6.50 Fisherman's Friends: One and All (12, 2022) Comedy sequel starring James Purefoy
9.00 Brassed Off (15, 1996) A South Yorkshire colliery band prepares for a competition. Drama starring Pete Postlethwaite
11.10-1.45am Glass (15, 2019) Three men with superhuman abilities end up in a hospital, where a doctor has sinister plans. Thriller with James McAvoy, Bruce Willis and Samuel L Jackson

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.35 pm FILM Sleeping Car to Trieste (PG, 1948) Spy thriller starring Jean Kent
3.30 Discovering Westerns Ian Nathan, Stephen Armstrong and Neil Norman select their favourite Westerns
5.00 FILM Doctor in Love (PG, 1960) Medical comedy starring Leslie Phillips and Michael Craig
7.00 The Footage Detectives Footage of London's river patrol in the 1970s
8.00 Maigret A woman who claimed an intruder was in her house is later found dead. In French
9.50-12.25am FILM The Key (12, 1958) A tugboat captain falls for his dead friend's former girlfriend. Second World War romantic drama with William Holden and Sophia Loren

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.35pm Digging Up Britain's Past The remains of a stable
7.35 The Stuarts
8.35 Franco: The Last Inquisitor Part one of two
9.50 The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship
10.55 The Stuarts
12.00-1.15am Franco: The Last Inquisitor

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm I Am Heath Ledger
7.50 My Icon: Leon Pryce
8.00 Mind Over Murder The six individuals convicted for a 1985 murder in Nebraska
11.00-1.00am FILM Bobby Robson: More Than a Manager (12, 2018) Exploring the career of the much-loved former football manager

Tuesday 18

★ Picks of the day

The Great ADHD Myth?
Channel 4, 8pm

The documentary courting controversy

Already the subject of an open letter from the charity ADHD UK, which decried the damage the title of this hour-long documentary might cause "before a single frame is broadcast", the good faith of this investigation by Dr Max Pemberton has been called into question. As an NHS psychiatrist, writer and broadcaster he is concerned that "ten years ago ADHD was relatively rare in children and it was hardly ever seen in adults. Now it's estimated that over 2.5 million people in the UK have it." Even Andy Burnham has commented on the burden that associated payments are placing on the benefits system. Tonight's film focuses on children, in particular ten-year-old Mason, *pictured*, who has been medicated for two years. Helen Stewart

Celebrity MasterChef
BBC1, 9pm

Grace Dent slinks into the studio with the air of a strong-jawed woman who has seen off every challenger and now reigns as the queen of the *MasterChef* kitchen. The five assembled star competitors gasp from behind their benches — Joe Pasquale, the comedian recently seen dropping Brian Conley off at Stansted airport on *Celebrity Hunted*, sports journalist Jason Mohammad, Olympic and Commonwealth medal-winning weightlifter Emily Campbell, *Love Island* contestant Shakira Khan and former pop star and *Strictly Come Dancing* winner Jay McGuiness. They know when they're being outshone. At Dent's side, "one of my fave chefs. He's from

Grace Dent and new MasterChef judge Giorgio Locatelli

Italy, he's a Michelin star master and our new *MasterChef* judge, Mr Giorgio Locatelli." Long live the new regime. **HS**

Emergency 24/7
BBC2, 9pm

Fly-on-the-wall medical documentaries always remind us how stunningly unflappable NHS staff can be. This one follows the A&E medics at Southmead Hospital in Bristol, where Jamie, the trauma team leader, likens the incoming flow of patients to a game of Jenga. On this particular Friday night a motorcyclist comes in with spinal damage after a crash, while a horse rider needs stitches after receiving a hoof to the face. **Emma Bullimore**

The Georgians with Rob Rinder & Ruth Goodman
5, 9pm

Rob Rinder and the historian Ruth Goodman continue their *Rich Lives, Poor Lives* series by taking us back to 1821, to the extravagant coronation of King George IV. Even by royal standards he was a monarch who loved to splash the cash — his fancy velvet robes cost £27 million in today's money and the banquet was unrivalled. But life wasn't so luxe for his hard-up subjects, who toiled relentlessly behind the scenes. **EB**

This week's best live sport Page 25

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Countryfile Treasures (r)
10.30 Garden Rescue (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing A bag-maker jumps at the chance to save an inflatable castle
2.45 Escape to the Country Jules Hudson helps a couple find a family home in Herefordshire
3.30 The Repair Shop Experts restore an elephant puppet, a watch, a sign from a race track and a hurling stick (r)
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show hosted by Jason Manford
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

De Niro as Al Capone (10.40pm)

7.00 The One Show Roman Kemp and Lauren Laverne present a mix of reports and live chat

7.30 EastEnders George and Nicola continue to deal with the escalated situation

8.00 The Great British Sewing Bee It's children's week, with the contestants following a pattern for a tutu, creating made-to-measure superhero outfits and repurposing fleece into cuddly toys (6/10)

9.00 Celebrity MasterChef New series. Joe Pasquale, Jason Mohammad, Emily Campbell, Shakira Khan and Jay McGuiness compete in the first heat. **See Pick of the Day**

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News

10.40 FILM The Untouchables (15, 1987) Incorruptible federal agent Eliot Ness is assigned the task of fighting organised crime in Prohibition-era Chicago and bringing the notorious gangster Al Capone to justice. Aware crooked police are undermining his investigations, he puts together his own elite squad to take on the Mob. Thriller starring Kevin Costner, Sean Connery and Robert De Niro

12.35 am The Hit List (r)
1.20 Weather for the Week Ahead
1.25 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Escape to the Country (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: The Great British Sewing Bee (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News Headlines
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games Quiz show (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer A pygmy goat goes into labour (r)
3.30 Serengeti II The landscape is flooded following a storm (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow From Sudeley Castle (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Guildford (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games With Edith Bowman, Rhys James, Anita Rani and Simon Rimmer (r)
6.30 Bear Grylls: Wild Reckoning A father and son are put to the test in the wilderness (r)

Saving Lives at Sea is back (8pm)

7.00 Nigellissima Featuring pork loin stuffed with oregano and Parma ham (3/6) (r)

7.30 Race Against the Tide New series. Sand sculpting contest presented by Iain Stirling (1/6)

8.00 Saving Lives at Sea New series. There's a 999 call about a fisherman who has fallen overboard and reports of an overcrowded small boat in the shipping lanes of the English Channel (1/10)

9.00 Emergency 24/7 New series. A look at the emergency department at Southmead Hospital, Bristol, revealing the teamwork required to keep the department running. **See Pick of the Day** (1/6)

10.00 Live at the Apollo Hosted by Stephen Bailey (6/7) (r)

10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis presented by Faisal Islam

11.05 The Vampire Lestat: Interview with the Vampire Lestat records his "posthumous" album and recalls being an ancient Queen's keeper (5/7)

11.55 The Vampire Lestat: Interview with the Vampire Before the big covert concert, Daniel has a last question (6/7)

12.50 am Sign Zone: Uncanny A student house (r) (SL)
1.50 Captive Audience: A Real American Horror Story (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.30 pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal David Dickinson and the team visit Telford's International Centre, where Tony Geering is tempted by a pair of timepieces (r)
3.00 Deal or No Deal Stephen Mulhern hosts as another contestant tries to open the red boxes in the right order (r)
4.00 Tipping Point Ben Shephard hosts the quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning £10,000 (r)
5.00 The Chase Bradley Walsh presents as contestants from London, Truro, Edinburgh and Mill Hill take on a Chaser (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Roger Moore, Maud Adams (10.45pm)

7.30 Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel A florist faces a race against time (5/6)

8.00 Emmerdale Billy is terrified at what Dawn might be capable of as paranoia grips them both

8.30 Coronation Street Kit leaves Sarah to deal with Kacey's threat and Idris hatches a plan

9.00 True Crime Presents: No Escape: Married to a Stalker The crimes of Janbaz Tarin, who went on the run after murdering his ex-partner Raneem Oudeh and her mother Khaola Saleem in August 2018

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News

10.45 FILM Octopussy (PG, 1983) Secret agent James Bond investigates the mysterious death of a fellow agent in East Berlin and uncovers a plot to start a third world war. Spy adventure starring Roger Moore, Maud Adams, Steven Berkoff and Louis Jourdan

1.10 am Shop on TV
3.00 The Summit Just seven of the original 14 remain (r) (SL)
3.50 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace: What Happened Next (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.30** The Great Food Guys. The duo cook a rack of Scottish lamb (r) **8.00** This Farming Life. Nikki and Ollie find out if their favourite buffalo is pregnant (r) **9.00** Murder Trial: Death of a Dog Walker. Former gamekeeper David Campbell takes the stand **10.00** David Wilson's Crime Files (r) **11.00** Scotcast. News discussion **11.30pm-Midnight** Icons of Football (r) **BBC2 Wales 7.00-7.30pm** SOS: Extreme Rescues (r) **BBC1 N Ireland 10.40pm** House of the Year (r) **11.10 FILM The Untouchables (1987) 1.05am** The Hit List (r) **1.50-6.00am** BBC News

The best of the week's films on TV

Pages 26-27

James Stewart stars in the Civil War drama Shenandoah
Film4, 3.15pm

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA A small New York diner (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway Transforming a dated terraced house into an inviting home (r)
2.10 Countdown With Debbie McGee in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun Ben Hillman helps a couple find a home on the Costa Blanca (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge An early arrival leads to chaos (r)
5.00 Château DIY The heat is on to paint a mural on a pool cover before it dries out (r)
6.00 American Pickers A Virginia bluegrass legend has a few valuable mementos (r)

Gloria Hunniford (9pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 The Great ADHD Myth? Psychiatrist Max Pemberton challenges conventional thinking about ADHD, to investigate if it really is a neurodevelopmental disorder. **See Pick of the Day**

9.00 Celebrity Hunted Gloria Hunniford provides a safe haven for two fugitives, while the hunters track two runners to a Leeds show bar, and close in on a capture in Scotland

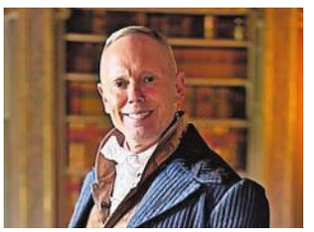
10.00 Gogglebox The armchair critics share their opinions on shows including *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!*, *Squid Game: The Challenge*, *All Her Fault* and *Celebrity Race Across the World* (r)

11.05 Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives Trewley's first rap song enjoys mixed success, and her Christmas present for her mum misfires, so she tries to make up for it by taking her to speed dating (r)

12.05 am Building Monaco's Superhomes (r) **1.05 Hotel Hell** (r) **1.55 The Piano** (r) **2.45** FILM **Omen (15, 2023) 4.20 Come Dine with Me** (r) **5.15 A Place in the Sun 5.45 Sunday Brunch** (r) **5.50 Countdown** (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate on the day's biggest stories
2.20 FILM **Living Next To Danger (PG, TVM, 2023)** A woman's daughter goes missing and suspicion falls on her new neighbours. Thriller with Kristi Murdock and Noemi Alexis
4.00 Castle The creator of a hit sketch comedy series is strangled with his own tie and thrown down a lift shaft (r)
4.55 Love Nature A London forager seeks food growing wild (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Gibraltar: Jewel of the Med A profile of the peninsula on the southern coast of Spain (r)
6.55 5 News Update



Rob Rinder goes Georgian (9pm)

7.00 Police Interceptors Several officers pursue two men in a van, who are racing through four counties and ramming police cars along the way (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders An uninsured Mercedes van refuses to stop on the M6, leading officers on a dangerous pursuit before patrols force it off the road

9.00 The Georgians with Rob Rinder & Ruth Goodman A look at the coronation of King George IV in 1820 — one of the most lavish and controversial royal events in British history. The pair explore how rich and poor alike became part of the royal spectacle. **See Pick of the Day**

10.30 James Bulger: The Trial The story of the murder trial of Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, the two 10-year-old killers of toddler James Bulger. With contributions from the prosecution and defence teams, journalists and James Bulger's mother (r)

12.05 am Serial Killer Wives (r)
1.00 Cruise TV (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.30 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Shows

BBC1 Scotland 7.00-7.30pm River City (r) **12.35am** Scotcast (r) **1.05** The Hit List (r) **1.50** Weather **1.55-6.00am** BBC News **STV 11.05pm** Cold Case Forensics: In the Blood (r) **12.00-3.00** Shop on TV **3.50-6.00am** Night Vision **S4C 6.00pm** Y Ci Perffaith (r) **6.30** Codi Hwyl (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Pobol y Cwm **8.25** Nol o'r Dibyn gyda Iolo Williams (r) **8.55** News **9.00** Siwrna Scandi Chris. Welsh fire chef Chris Roberts goes on a Scandi food journey (r) **10.00** Iaith ar Daith (r) **11.00-12.05am** Y Cosmos (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm The Architecture the Railways Built Tim Dunn visits Ribblehead Viaduct in the Yorkshire Dales
7.45 The Flying Gardener Creating stunning vistas using trees
8.00 To the Manor Born Audrey and DeVere clash over church
8.30 Keeping Up Appearances Hyacinth tries to buy a country retreat
9.00 Rise of the Clans Examining the history of Scotland's ancient clans (1/3)
10.00 Britain in Focus: A Photographic History Exploring the development of the art of photography in the UK (1/3)
11.00 The Secret Genius of Plants Documentary exploring the world of plants (1/2)
11.55-12.50am Deep, Down and Dirty: The Science of Soil

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders The wife of the businessman behind a failed craft centre project goes missing (S1, ep4)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat Missing explosives cause trouble for Blaketon
6.55 Heartbeat A serious road accident causes chaos
8.00 Vera The detective investigates a suspicious death on a remote island
10.00 Grantchester Leonard's drinking lands him in a prison cell (S10, ep5)
11.00 Grantchester The frontman of a rock band is found murdered (S10, ep6)
11.50-12.55am Trial & Retribution An ex-con sets out to prove he was innocent of murder (S11, ep5)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60
8.00 Top Gear
9.00 FILM **Mission: Impossible 2 (15, 2000)** Action thriller sequel starring Tom Cruise and Dougray Scott
11.00-12.55am FILM **Mission: Impossible III (12, 2006)** Action thriller sequel

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

4.00pm Live Tennis Day six of the Cincinnati Open
7.30 Live Betfred Super League: Hull Kingston Rovers v Warrington Wolves (Kick-off **8.00**). Action from the match
10.15 Live Tennis Coverage of the Cincinnati Open
12.00-4.00am Live Tennis Day six of the Cincinnati Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Nineties
4.00 Discovering: Gina Lollobrigida
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2023
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents A man is convinced his wife buried his dog alive
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 The World in a Painting: Manet's Lamps The story of the emergence of electric light in modern society
9.15 Art Traffickers: Treasures Stolen from the Tombs The stories behind those who have excavated and stolen masterpieces
10.15 Wonderland: Gothic A look at the Gothic revival in architecture
11.15-12.15am The Movies

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.30 pm Magnum, PI
2.35 The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes A farmer's son is suspected of murder
3.45 Boon Something goes missing from the office safe
4.50 The Professionals An Israeli minister is abducted
5.55 Minder Arthur's niece gets married
7.00 The Motorbike Show Henry Cole and the team head into the final stage of building and testing the landspeed record bike
8.00 The Grand Fishing Adventure Ali and Bobby head off on the final leg of their tour
9.00 Ice Road Truckers Alex Debogorski comes to the rescue of a stranded family
10.00 All Elite Wrestling: Collision The latest hard-hitting action
12.00-12.55am Dark Side of the Ring

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor
8.00 The 1% Club
9.00 Olivia Attwood: The Price of Perfection Olivia looks into the booming trend of facelifts for the under fifties
10.00 Family Guy
10.35 Family Guy
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am American Dad!

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

1.30-4.00pm Live Cycling: Men Coverage of stage one of the Tour of Limousin
7.45 Live Uefa Champions League A play-off round first-leg match (Kick-off TBA)
10.00 PL Preview
11.00-11.30 T100 Triathlon World Tour Highlights
1.00-4.00am Live MLB

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me Dinner parties in and around Cumbria
3.20 Four in a Bed
3.50 Four in a Bed
4.20 Four in a Bed
4.50 Four in a Bed
5.20 Four in a Bed
5.50 Car S.O.S. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw secretly restore an Aston Martin DB6
6.50 Car S.O.S. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a Renault 5 GT Turbo
7.55 Grand Designs A Spanish architect and his wife build their dream home in Buckinghamshire
9.00 PopMaster TV New series. Ken Bruce hosts the first heat of the music quiz
10.00 24 Hours in A&E An 89-year-old man is admitted with acute abdominal pain
11.05-12.05am 24 Hours in A&E A motorcyclist is airlifted to hospital

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Classic Neighbours
2.30 Classic Neighbours
3.00 Whitstable Pearl Mike becomes suspicious of his neighbour (S2, ep2)
4.05 Lovejoy (S6, ep8)
5.20 As Time Goes By
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S6, ep1)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S6, ep2)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine (S6, ep3)
8.00 'Allo 'Allo!
8.30 'Allo 'Allo! René's plans to elope with Yvette go awry
9.00 'Allo 'Allo! René travels on the night train to Geneva
9.35 New Tricks New evidence sheds light on the death of a criminal (S7, ep7)
10.35 Luther The detective's date is interrupted (S3, ep2)
11.55-1.05am Lovejoy A penniless sculptor seeks help (S2, ep2)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Blue Planet A journey to the deepest parts of the world's oceans
8.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics
9.00 Bangers & Cash
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.45pm House of the Dragon Fantasy drama (S2, ep1)
7.45 House of the Dragon Otto schemes (S2, ep2)
9.00 Little Bird New series. Canadian drama starring Darla Contois (1/6)
10.00 Little Bird (2/6)
11.00-12.05am House of the Dragon Fantasy (S2, ep1)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.20 pm The Woodlanders (U, 1997) Thomas Hardy drama starring Emily Woof
3.15 Shenandoah (PG, 1965) American Civil War western starring James Stewart
5.20 The Lost World (U, 1960) Fantasy starring Claude Rains
7.15 Horizon Line (15, 2020) An estranged couple discover new altitudes of fear aboard a Cessna plane when the pilot suffers a heart attack. Thriller starring Allison Williams
9.00 65 (12, 2023) When an astronaut crashes on a mysterious planet, he fights for survival amidst the deadly wildlife. Sci-fi adventure starring Adam Driver
10.50-1.30am The Woman King (15, 2022) Historical drama starring Viola Davis

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.35 pm FILM **Green for Danger (PG, 1946)** Comedy thriller starring Alastair Sim
3.35 The Bespoke Overcoat Ghost story starring Alfie Bass
4.20 FILM **The Gentle Sex (U, 1943)** Second World War drama with Joan Greenwood
6.10 Look at Life
6.25 Whiplash
6.55 The Man from UNCLE A Thrush operation uses a discotheque as a front
7.55 Buccaneer Suspicion grows about Burton's big deal
9.00 FILM **A Dandy in Aspic (PG, 1968)** A British agent is assigned to track down a Soviet mole — but nobody suspects that he is the spy in question. Spy thriller with Laurence Harvey
11.10 Fortean TV
11.45-1.25am Legend of the Witches

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.15pm World of Stonehenge
7.20 The Stuarts
8.30 Franco: The Last Inquisitor Spanish general Francisco Franco Bahamonde
9.45 The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship
10.55 The Stuarts
12.00-1.15am Franco: The Last Inquisitor Documentary

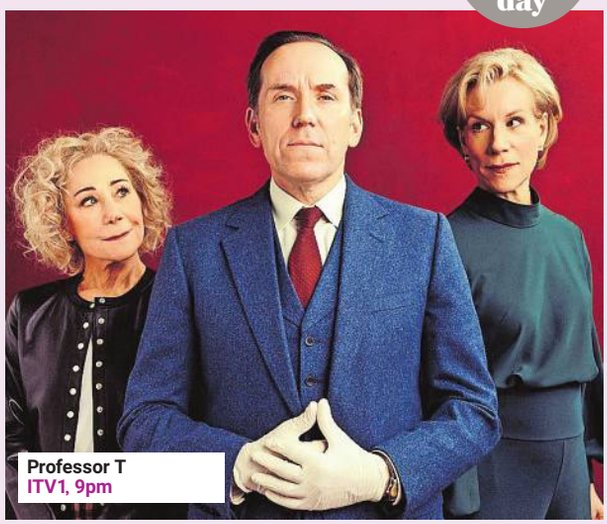
Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm I Am Patrick Swayze A tribute to the actor
7.50 My Icon: Casey Stoney
8.00 Mind Over Murder
9.00 Mind Over Murder New information surfaces about coercive interrogations
10.05 Mind Over Murder
11.10-1.00am Schmeichel Proile of Peter Schmeichel

Wednesday 19

★ Picks of the day



Professor T
ITV1, 9pm

Ben Miller's Cambridge criminologist is back

Ben Miller's OCD crime consultant Jasper Tempest has deadpanned his way to another series. Life feels bleak as we return to Cambridge, the team mourning DI Lisa Donckers (Emma Naomi), who was brutally run down at the end of last season. Jasper is spiralling and Dan (Barney White) is down in the dumps. Luckily Lisa's ditzy replacement, Chloe (Rhian Blundell), should lighten the mood — and for all of her verbal diarrhoea she fosters some rather impressive instincts. She'll need to learn fast — her first day takes her to a mysterious death on a boat and Dan has no patience for showing her the ropes. Watch out for Zoë Wanamaker as Jasper's oddball aunt Zelda and Juliet Stevenson as the therapist Dr Helena Goldberg. Emma Bullimore

Fake or Fortune? What Happened Next? BBC1, 8pm

For most of us the shed is home to a lawnmower and dried-out paint pots. It's a different story for Alain Brun, who discovered sketchbooks thought to belong to the French artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. If genuine, the early watercolours and drawings would fetch a six-figure sum, but Brun needed proof. He had a disappointing experience last time he saw Fiona Bruce and the team, including the co-presenter Philip Mould, as the committee refused to authenticate the work — they believed it was more likely the sketches were by the artist's tutor. But Brun was sure he was sitting on something more special. Eight years on he's refusing to give up and after

Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould

gathering new evidence he's hoping to convince the committee. As ever, this show serves up more suspense than an episode of *Poirot*. **EB**

Rome: A History of the Eternal City BBC4, 8.15pm

In 2012 the historian Simon Sebag Montefiore presented a three-part series uncovering the role of religion in creating and maintaining the power of Rome. The city is the beating heart of the Catholic church, but as Montefiore points out, its holy status owes everything to its pre-Christian past. At 8pm the presenter recalls the making of this impeccably researched series in *Simon Sebag Montefiore Remembers... Rome*. **Joe Clay**

Couples Therapy BBC2, 10pm

If you want evidence of a divided America, look no further than the couples featured in the fifth run of the series following therapy sessions conducted by the psychoanalyst Dr Orna Guralnik. A couple, Guralnik says, is a "mini political system". Marjorie and Jason have been married for 11 years, but their union is fraying. The differences are at first framed around moving house, but it soon becomes clear they are at odds politically. **JC**

This week's seven-day radio guide Pages 42-43

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Countryfile Treasures (r)
10.30 Garden Rescue (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing Sarah Moore seeks items at Witley recycling centre in Surrey
2.45 Escape to the Country An artistic couple want to escape to the Scottish Highlands (r)
3.30 The Repair Shop The experts restore a village sign (r)
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show hosted by Jason Manford
5.15 Pointless Quiz show hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Nish Kumar (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Dev Patel in Monkey Man (11.30pm)

7.00 The One Show Presented by Clara Amfo and JB Gill
7.30 EastEnders It is the day of Cindy and Kim's hen dos, while Ross steps up for Joel
8.00 Fake or Fortune? What Happened Next An update on a 2018 edition exploring whether two sketchbooks were really the work of a young Toulouse-Lautrec. **See Pick of the Day**
9.00 Celebrity MasterChef Joe Pasquale, Jason Mohammad, Emily Campbell, Shakira Khan and Jay McGuiness serve up a dish using a mystery ingredient and cook a pie for guest Paddy McGuinness
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 MOTD: Uefa Champions League Action from the play-off round first-leg ties, including Celtic v LASK staged at Celtic Park
11.30 FILM Monkey Man (18, 2024) A man unleashes a campaign of vengeance against the men who killed his mother. Action thriller, co-written, produced, directed by and starring Dev Patel, with Sharlto Copley
1.25 am Weather for the Week Ahead The latest forecast
1.30 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.15 am Homes Under the Hammer North Shields and Norwich (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Great Japanese Railway Journeys (r) (SL)
8.30 Great Continental Railway Journeys (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games Trivia-based games (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer (r)
3.30 Serengeti II (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow From Lake Bala, Wales (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Derbyshire (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games With Edith Bowman and Simon Rimmer (r)
6.30 Bear Grylls: Wild Reckoning Bear revisits some of the people he tried to help (r)

Dr Orna Guralnik offers therapy (10pm)

7.00 Today at the Test England v Pakistan. Action from the opening day of the first Test in the three-match series, which is being held at Headingley Cricket Ground in Leeds
8.00 Digging for Britain Alice Roberts explores treasures in the west of Britain, including the remains of Snodhill Castle, a ruin in Herefordshire and the oldest house ever found in Cardiff (6/6) (r)
9.00 Murder Trial: Death of a Dog Walker With Brian Low's family seeking justice, David Campbell takes the stand to defend himself against a murder charge built on circumstantial evidence (2/2)
10.00 Couples Therapy New series. Relationship counselling. **See Pick of the Day** (1/9)
10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis presented by Katie Razzall
11.05 Couples Therapy A patient seeks advice from an expert in neurodivergence (2/9)
11.35 Couples Therapy A pair face both societal and internalised homophobia (3/9)
12.05 am Buried with Michael Sheen Allegations of toxic contamination in Wales (r)
1.05 Sign Zone: Amityville — An Origin Story (4/4) (r) (SL)
1.55 Evolution Why the horse became so fast (5/5) (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.00 pm ITV News; Weather
1.30 Live ITV Racing: Live from York Francesca Cumani and Ed Chamberlin present coverage of the opening day of the Ebor Meeting, including feature race the Juddmonte International Stakes. Analysis comes from Jason Weaver, Adele Mulrennan and Ruby Walsh, with reporting by Matt Chapman, Oli Bell and Mick Fitzgerald, and commentary from Richard Hoiles
4.30 Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals Compilation of dramatic endgames (r)
5.00 The Chase Quiz show hosted by Bradley Walsh (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

The Langham hotel in London (7.30pm)

7.30 Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel Celebrating the 160th anniversary (6/6)
8.00 Emmerdale Kev makes a confession and later he smashes Caleb's laptop
8.30 Coronation Street Idris coaches Ollie ahead of the poker night at Speed Daal
9.00 Professor T New series. Jasper is no longer consulting for the police following Lisa's death but he is lured back in when a woman disappears. Drama starring Ben Miller. **See Pick of the Day** (1/6)
10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
10.45 Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace: What Happened Next Revisiting the stories of two foundlings (r)
11.40 British Touring Car Championship Highlights Action from Knockhill
1.05 am Shop on TV
3.00 Love & Death (r)
3.50 Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel (r) (SL)
4.15 Unwind with ITV
5.30 Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy The mountains (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.30** Scotland's Home of the Year 2024 (r) **8.00** Scotland's Greatest Escape (r) **8.55** Beechgrove Repotted (r) **9.00** Island Crossings (r) **10.00** River City **10.30** Icons of Football (r) **11.00** Scotcast **11.30pm-Midnight** The Trials That Shocked Scotland (r) **BBC1 N Ireland 10.40pm** The Big Deal with Steph McGovern. Selling artwork **11.40** MOTD: Uefa Champions League **12.30am** Alan Carr's Picture Slam. Game show (r) **1.15-6.00am** BBC News **BBC1 Scotland 11.30pm** Scotcast (r) **12.00midnight FILM Monkey Man (2024)** **1.55am** Weather for the Week Ahead

The best guide to streaming
Pages 22-24

Matt and Emma Willis host a new series of Love Is Blind
Netflix, out today

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA In Yonkers, New York (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway A plumber and a joiner fix a property in West Yorkshire (r)
2.10 Countdown With Debbie McGee in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun A couple seek a holiday home in Fuerteventura (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge A curdled curry leave a bad taste with the judges (r)
5.00 Château DIY Building a steam room in a bridal suite (r)
6.00 American Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz are spoilt for choice in Ohio (r)

Extraordinary Extensions (8pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Extraordinary Extensions A Croydon couple build a barn extension inspired by their passions for cars and crafts. Plus, a revisit to a Manchester property to see if a glass extension has been a success

9.00 Love You to Death New series. The story of Lisa Hayden-Johnson's shocking deception, during which she fabricated her son's illness. Continues tomorrow (1/3)

10.00 Outback Murder Highway New series. Crime documentary investigating killings along a 500-mile Australian road, beginning with two student nurses who went missing while hitch-hiking in 1972 (1/4)

11.05 Outback Murder Highway An investigation into the murder of three New Zealand motorcyclists who were shot dead near a remote caravan park at Mount Isa (2/4)

12.05 am Murder Case: The Digital Detectives (r) (SL)
1.00 Celebrity Hunted (r) (SL)
2.50 Hotel Hell (r) **3.40 Yorkshire by the Sea** (r) **4.35 House of Craft** (r) **4.55-5.50 Couples Come Dine with Me** (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM The Body in the Attic (PG, TVM, 2023) An unhappy wife convinces her lover to move into her attic. Thriller starring Abigail Hawk, Donny Boaz and Marc Herrmann
4.00 Castle A murder reminds the writer of a pivotal event in his childhood. Last in the series (r)
4.55 Love Nature Examining the reintroduction of pine martens into Dartmoor and Exmoor (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Capri: Jewel of the Med Cameras focus on one of the Mediterranean's smallest inhabited islands (r)
6.55 5 News Update

A British pine marten (4.55pm)

7.00 Car Pound Cops Tracking cars as they are seized, with access to car pounds, police forces, council enforcement agencies, and more (8/8) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts As the team at Barnsley Casualty deal with winter pressures, a doctor looks after a woman who has been bleeding heavily from her nose for over three hours

9.00 999: Critical Condition A man worries that he may never walk again after a road traffic accident and a mother fights for her life during a severe asthma attack (6/6)

10.00 A&E: Crash Scene Emergency The work of medical teams at University Hospital Coventry's trauma unit. Emergency services and helicopter medics perform lifesaving CPR on a man in cardiac arrest (r)

11.05 Ambulance: Code Red Two critical Care Paramedics are dispatched to help a 64-year-old man who has collapsed at work with a suspected cardiac arrest (r)

12.05 am A&E After Dark (r)
1.00 Cruise TV (r) **2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors** (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.30 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Children's Shows (r) (SL)

2.00-6.00am BBC News **STV 1.30-4.29pm** Live STV Racing: From York **11.05** Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace: What Happened Next (r) **12.05-3.00am** Shop **4.15-5.30am** Unwind **UTV 10.45pm** Life Times **11.15-11.40pm** Abbey Clancy: Celebrity Homes (r)

S4C 6.00pm Dan Do (r) **6.30** Adeiladu'r Freuddwyd: Camp Out West (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Pobol y Cwm. The life of a villager hangs in the balance **8.25** Cartrefi Cymru (r) **8.55** News **9.00** Priodas Pum Mil (r) **10.00** Y Deis (r) **10.30-11.35** Ty Ffit (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Villages by the Sea Cushendall in Northern Ireland
7.30 Canal Boat Diaries Sheffield to Keadby
8.00 Simon Sebag Montefiore Remembers ... Rome: A History of the Eternal City A look back at the series. **See Pick of the Day**
8.15 Rome: A History of the Eternal City The role of religion in creating the power of the city. **See Pick of the Day** (1/3)
9.15 Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit A look at identity and citizenship within the Roman Empire (3/4)
10.15 I, Claudius Sejanus seeks permission to marry Livilla (7/12)
11.05 I, Claudius Caligula is hailed as the new Caesar (8/12)
12.00-12.55am The Australian Wars (1/3)

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders Barnaby visits a new age commune (S1, ep5)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat Jenny's younger brother visits
6.55 Heartbeat Vernon attempts to impress the new doctor
8.00 Midsomer Murders A man is mauled to death by a wild boar (S16, ep3)
10.00 Grantchester Cathy and Mrs Chapman's new business venture hits a serious obstacle (S10, ep7)
11.00 Grantchester Alphy and Geordie investigate a death related to a Fascist lecturer (S10, ep8)
11.50-12.55am Trial & Retribution Part one of two. Walker looks into a woman's disappearance for a friend (S11, ep7)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60 Double bill
8.00 FILM Mission: Impossible (PG, 1996) Action thriller starring Tom Cruise
9.45 Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont Spelling Bee
11.20-1.05am FILM Yesterday (12, 2019) Comedy starring Himesh Patel and Lily James

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

10.00am Live Test Cricket: England v Pakistan Coverage of the opening day of the first Test in the three-match series, held in Leeds
7.00pm-4.00am Live Tennis Coverage of day seven of the Cincinnati Open, a hard-court tournament at Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason, Ohio

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Nineties
4.00 Discovering: Jack Nicholson
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2023
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 Voices of the Valleys Last in the series
9.00 Battle of the Irish Dancers Following preparations
10.00 The Eighties Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power in the Soviet Union
11.00 The Art of Architecture: Great Museums of the World Remarkable museums
12.00-1.15am Inside Guggenheim The museum in Bilbao

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.30 pm Magnum, PI Thomas meets Jessica Fletcher
2.35 The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes Holmes is asked to prevent a marriage
3.45 Boon Protecting a woman from her husband is not easy
4.50 The Professionals Bodie's girlfriend is critically injured
5.55 Minder Arthur helps an ex-con recover his loot from a robbery
7.00 The Motorbike Show The 1944 Triumph 3HW is put to the test
8.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Christmas Special Joe Marler and Katherine Ryan take part for charity
9.00 FILM RoboCop 3 (18, 1993) Sci-fi thriller sequel starring Robert Burke
11.05-1.05am All Elite Wrestling: Collision Hard-hitting action

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor
8.00 The 1% Club Quiz
9.00 Family Guy Peter is arrested for a hate crime
9.30 Family Guy Quagmire is reunited with a former lover
10.00 Family Guy
10.35 Family Guy
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am American Dad!

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

10.45am Live Women's Cycling World Tour Stage one of the Lloyds Tour of Britain
3.45pm-4.45 Live Men's Cycling World Tour Stage one of the Renewi Tour
7.30-10.30 Live Uefa Champions League A play-off round first-leg match
11.30-3.45am Live CPL

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me In Hertfordshire
3.20 Four in a Bed Back-to-back editions
5.50 Car S.O.S Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw secretly restore a Fiat 500
6.50 Car S.O.S Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw secretly restore a Sunbeam Alpine
7.55 Grand Designs An underground home on a hill near Canterbury
9.00 The Roman Empire by Train with Alice Roberts Alice explores Rome itself, visiting two of the city's spectacular private estates
10.00 24 Hours in A&E A 22-month-old girl is rushed to A&E after being kicked in the head by a horse
11.05-12.10am 24 Hours in A&E A 91-year-old is airlifted to hospital after a car crash

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Classic Neighbours
2.30 Classic Neighbours
3.00 Whitstable Pearl Thriller (S2, ep3)
4.05 Lovejoy (S6, ep9)
5.20 As Time Goes By Romance (S3, ep2)
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S6, ep4)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S6, ep5)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Clegg searches for treasure (S6, ep6)
8.00 The Chelsea Detective A former pop star is found dead (S3, ep1)
9.00 The Chelsea Detective Max and Layla investigate a string of potential suspects
10.00 New Tricks A former Irish dissident sheds light on a 1983 abduction (S7, ep8)
11.20-12.40am Luther The cop realises a vigilante killer is on the loose (S3, ep3)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Blue Planet
8.00 Michael Palin: Travels of a Lifetime The actor recalls the making of *Full Circle*
9.00 Simon Reeve's South America Tierra Del Fuego
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.45pm House of the Dragon Grudges resurface (S2, ep3)
8.00 House of the Dragon Cole mounts a campaign in the Crownlands (S2, ep4)
9.00 Task Crime drama starring Mark Ruffalo (1/7)
10.15 Station Eleven (7/10)
11.15-12.20am Station Eleven Sci-fi drama series (8/10)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.05 pm Journey to the Center of the Earth (U, 1959) Sci-fi adventure starring Pat Boone
3.55 Von Ryan's Express (PG, 1965) Second World War action adventure starring Frank Sinatra
6.25 Moonfall (12, 2022) A mysterious force knocks the Moon from its orbit and two astronauts try to avert catastrophe. Sci-fi thriller starring Patrick Wilson and Halle Berry
9.00 Fury (15, 2014) An American tank crew undertakes a final mission behind enemy lines in the last months of the Second World War. Drama starring Brad Pitt and Shia LaBeouf
11.40-2.50am The Beast (15, 2023) Sci-fi drama starring Léa Seydoux

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.35 pm FILM Ring of Spies (PG, 1964) Fact-based spy thriller starring Bernard Lee
3.20 Look at Life
3.45 Dial 999 Two criminals plot to extract a large sum of money through kidnap
4.20 FILM The End of the Affair (PG, 1955) Drama starring Deborah Kerr
6.30 Give Us a Clue An edition from 1985
7.00 Out of Town Jack Hargreaves looks back at lambing on the chalk downs
7.35 FILM Genevieve (U, 1953) Comedy with Dinah Sheridan
9.20 FILM The Story of Esther Costello (PG, 1957) Drama starring Joan Crawford
11.25-1.35am FILM Open Fire (12, 1994) Fact-based crime drama starring Rupert Graves

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.15pm World of Stonehenge
7.20 The Stuarts
8.30 Dad's Secret War: France 1944 Documentary
9.40 The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship
10.55 The Stuarts How Scotland lost its sovereignty
12.00-1.15am Dad's Secret War: France 1944

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm FILM The Loneliest Whale: The Search for 52 (PG, 2021) A rare whale that calls out at a frequency unrecognised by other whales
8.00 Black Widow The police investigation the crimes of Dena Thompson
11.00-1.00am Premier League 360: Big Sam's Bolton

Thursday 20

★ Picks of the day

Ludwig
BBC1, 9pm

David Mitchell's puzzle-setting sleuth

Two years on from its debut run, the beloved crime drama returns with the revamped set-up agreed in that series' finale: John (David Mitchell) is now a police consultant, and only Carol (Dorothy Atkinson) and Russell (Dipo Ola) know that the puzzle-setter impersonated his missing twin. His first case — a matriarch's murder in a box at the theatre — soon signals an apparent policy of more stellar casting. Rebecca Front and Doon Mackichan are the victim's daughters, and both confess to killing her. Sian Clifford's Joanne, the local MP, witnessed the crime and looks set to appear in subsequent episodes. And Mark Bonnar plays an editor whom Lucy (Anna Maxwell Martin) wheedles into letting her pose as a journalist. John Dugdale

Dragons' Den
BBC1, 8pm

After a five-month hiatus series 23 restarts with two guest Dragons in the Den: the beauty moguls Susie Ma and Jenna Meek fill seats vacated by Sara Davies (already gone) and Touker Suleyman (off soon). With Deborah Meaden that means three women, which Meek claims is a "first". This looks to be mistaken — there were earlier "girl power" trios — but the female majority does seem to contribute to a different mood, both towards the business hopefuls and among the fatcat quintet. Almost all of tonight's pitches — for start-ups flogging haircare products, sweets and Gen Z travel — attract interest, and when two or more want to invest, they team up instead of sniping. Indeed, so amiable (or defanged) are Peter Jones and co now that there's a four-Dragon deal. **JD**

Susie Ma joins Dragons' Den

Lion
National Geographic, 8pm/9pm

Jon Favreau directed *The Lion King* (2019) and he has joined forces with Mike Gunton of the BBC's Natural History Unit for this cinematic four-part series that tells the story of the lion cub Kio. Filmed over four years in the Masai Mara Nature Reserve in Kenya, it follows Kio as he contends with loss, exile, fierce rivalries and a battle for survival. Adding to the epic feel is a soundtrack from Hans Zimmer, who scored the 1994 animated film. **Joe Clay**

A House Through Time
BBC2, 9pm

We're into the Victorian era and the house on Calton Hill in Edinburgh is revealing more of its secrets. The producers must have known they had struck gold when they realised its former inhabitants include a bagpipe maker, a photographer and a notorious brothel keeper. There is also the story of Thomas Mains, a maker of expensive shoes whose customers won't pay, leaving his wife, Mary, to call in the debts after Thomas's death. **JC**

This week's streaming guide Pages 22-24

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Countryfile Treasures (r)
10.30 Garden Rescue (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing Sarah Moore attempts to save a 100-year-old rug
2.45 Escape to the Country A couple from Kent search for a property in Cornwall (r)
3.30 The Repair Shop Items include a Victorian movie machine and a pair of dilapidated designer chairs (r)
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show hosted by Jason Manford
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

The Truth About My Murder (10.40pm)

7.00 The One Show Roman Kemp and Clara Amfo present the live magazine show

7.30 EastEnders It is the day of Penny's shop opening, but things don't go to plan

8.00 Dragons' Den Evan Davis presents as entrepreneurs pitch water-saving hair care, traditional confectionery, handcrafted spice blends and a mission-led travel start-up. **See Pick of the Day**

9.00 Ludwig New series. An unusual double confession at the theatre sees John taking centre stage as he must prove who didn't commit the crime. **See Pick of the Day** (1/6)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News

10.40 The Truth About My Murder New series. The police investigation into a murder at Wentwood Forest in 1996 (1/6)

11.20 The Truth About My Murder How police got to the truth after the body of a woman was found in a suitcase next to the M4 motorway (2/6)

12.00 am The Truth About My Murder The death of a woman in a car crash in south Wales that soon pointed to murder
12.40 Alan Carr's Picture Slam (r)
1.25 Weather for the Week Ahead
1.30 BBC News Headline round-up

BBC2

6.30 am Escape to the Country (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Gardeners' World Clifftop gardening (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News Headlines
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games Quiz show (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer (r)
3.30 Serengeti II The hyenas make life hard for the jackals and the leopard cubs (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow From Burton-on-Trent (r)
5.10 Flog It! At the Royal Marines Museum in Hampshire (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Edith Bowman, Rhys James, Anita Rani and Simon Rimmer take part (r)
6.30 Richard Osman's House of Games Quiz show (r)

A leopard cub: Serengeti II (3.30pm)

7.00 Today at the Test England v Pakistan. Highlights of the second day of the first Test in the three-match series, held at Headingley Cricket Ground in Leeds. The teams last met here in this format in 2018

8.00 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern Having said goodbye to one pair, the six remaining teams are tasked with buying and selling works to meet the brief of two high-end homeowners (2/6)

9.00 A House Through Time David Olusoga examines the life of Victorian-era residents of the house on Calton Hill, including Thomas Mains, a maker of expensive shoes. **See Pick of the Day** (2/4)

10.00 Red Dwarf The Inquisitor arrives on board (2/6) (r)

10.30 Newsnight Analysing the day's events with Paddy O'Connell

11.05 Emergency 24/7 A look at the emergency department at Southmead Hospital, Bristol, revealing the everyday pressures as well as the teamwork required to keep the department running (1/6) (r)

12.05 am FILM Tár (15, 2022) Accusations surface about conductor Lydia Tár and a graduate of her academy. Drama starring Cate Blanchett
2.35 Sign Zone: The Mother of All Cons Documentary (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.00 pm ITV News; Weather
1.30 Live ITV Racing: From York Francesca Cumani and Ed Chamberlin present coverage of the second day of the Ebor Meeting, including feature race the Yorkshire Oaks. Analysis comes from Jason Weaver, Adele Mulrennan and Ruby Walsh, with commentary by Richard Hoiles
4.30 Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals Compilation of some of the most dramatic endgames from the quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase Contestants from from Glasgow, Birmingham, West Yorkshire and the Isle of Sheppey take on a Chaser (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy (7.30pm)

7.30 Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy Tom explores Sicily's citrus heritage. Last in the series

8.00 Emmerdale Kev warns Caleb and Ruby that he will expose them if he faces prison

8.30 Coronation Street Leanne has a go at Idris for gambling with her money

9.00 The Chase Around the World The teams land in the final city, Athens, where they must take on and defeat all the Chasers in head-to-head battles across the region. Bradley Walsh hosts (6/6)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News

10.45 FILM Skyfall (12, 2012) James Bond pursues a mysterious criminal mastermind who has orchestrated a terrorist attack on MI6 headquarters, and discovers a former agent with revenge in mind. Action thriller starring Daniel Craig and Javier Bardem

1.20 am Shop on TV
3.00 Love & Death Candy testifies that she feared for her life. Last in the series (r)
4.00 Unwind with ITV
5.05 Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special Game show (r) (SL)

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven **7.30** Beechgrove Garden **8.00** World Pipe Band Championships **9.00** Martin Compston's Scottish Fling. The actor and Phil MacHugh travel from St Andrews to Aberdeen (r) **9.30** Martin Compston's Scottish Fling. Martin and Phil MacHugh explore the Highlands (r) **10.00** Scot Squad (r) **10.30** Edinburgh Unlocked **11.00pm-Midnight** Jim Smith Live from Perth. The farmer and comedian performs to a packed audience in his home town (r) **BBC1 Wales 12.40-1.40am** Buried with Michael Sheen. Investigating allegations of toxic contamination in south Wales (r)

The best of the week's films on TV

Pages 26-27

Al Pacino stars in Michael Mann's 1995 LA-set thriller, Heat
Film4, 9pm

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA From Brooklyn (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway (r)
2.10 Countdown With Debbie McGee in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun A father and daughter seek a holiday home in Estepona on the western Costa del Sol (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge The contestants are challenged to host an event (r)
5.00 Château DIY A cow shed is converted into a sophisticated business suite (r)
6.00 American Pickers An ultra-rare Ford Model-A tow truck is unearthed (r)

Love You to Death (9pm/10pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Renovation Rescue In South Wales, a fed-up family who've been living in a building site with their two young children for 18 months decide to complete their renovation themselves

9.00 Love You to Death Lisa's world implodes as an unthinkable truth is revealed: Matthew's illnesses are not as they seem. Matthew comes to terms with a new reality (2/3)

10.00 Love You to Death As Lisa is dubbed "Britain's Most Evil Mother" in the press, Matthew confronts his past and meets the professionals who worked on his case, as he searches for the elusive truth (3/3)

11.05 Outback Murder Highway Documentary investigating the disappearance of Tony Jones in 1982 in hopes of determining whether he was one of the victims of serial killer Andy Allbury (3/4)

12.05 am Outback Murder Highway
12.55 Crime Scene Cleaners (r) (SL)
1.50 Kitchen Nightmares USA (r)
2.40 The Schoolgirl Terrorist? (r)
3.35 Dictator: The Hitler Interviews (r)
4.30-5.25 Come Dine with Me (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM Sins in the Family (12, TVM, 2023) A suburban wife and mother's perfect life threatens to fall apart when a school counsellor becomes uncomfortably close to her daughter. Thriller starring Moniqua Plante
4.00 Castle Part one of two. A call from a stranger ignites an explosive chain of events (r)
4.55 Love Nature (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Corsica: Jewel of the Med Cameras focus on the French island, which boasts 600 miles of stunning coastline (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Benidorm Is Murder (9pm)

7.00 Around the World in First Class Josie Gibson heads to Hong Kong, stays at the Rosewood Hotel, and heads out on a luxury yacht (4/4) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 The Yorkshire Vet Matt Smith helps a cow who has suffered a massive prolapse after giving birth. Cameras also focus on a Boston Terrier who has a very sore mouth

9.00 Benidorm Is Murder Dennis and Rosa investigate the death of a former jackpot winner, as threats mount and rumours swirl. Crime drama starring John Hannah and Carolina Bécquer (4/6)

10.00 Killer at the Crime Scene The murder of Karla Godoy, who vanished after going on holiday to Peru. As detectives raced to uncover the truth, a shocking confession led to an international manhunt (r)

11.05 Fare Dodgers: At War with the Law In London, investigators hunt for a woman thought to owe more than £2,300 in unpaid fares, and attempt to stop her at Chadwell Heath (r)

12.05 am Street Cops: Catching the Yobs (r) **1.00 Cruise TV** (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.55 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.30 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.30 Entertainment News on 5
5.40 Children's Shows

BBC1 N Ireland 10.40pm The Crime I Can't Forget (r) **11.30** The Truth About My Murder **12.10am** The Truth About My Murder **12.50-1.30am** The Truth About My Murder **BBC1 Scotland 7.00-7.30pm** River City (r) **STV 1.30-4.29pm** Live STV Racing: From York

1.20-3.00am Shop **4.00-5.05am** Unwind **S4C 6.00pm** Cynefin (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Pobol y Cwm. Britt makes a big decision **8.25** Gwlad y Basg: Gwilym Bowen Rhys (r) **8.55** News **9.00** Sioe Sir Benfro 2026 **10.00** Taclo'r Ty (r) **10.30-11.35** Yr Afon (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Villages by the Sea Visiting Norfolk's Holkham Estate
7.30 Canal Boat Diaries Robbie Cumming tackles the fast-flowing River Trent
8.00 The Bridge: Fifty Years Across the Forth Documentary celebrating the Forth Road Bridge
9.00 FILM The French Connection (18, 1971) Two New York cops use unorthodox methods to break a drug ring smuggling heroin into the US from France. Fact-based crime thriller with Gene Hackman
10.40 The Poughkeepsie Shuffle: Tracing "The French Connection" Critic Mark Kermode examines the making of the classic thriller
11.35-1.15am FILM The Graduate (12, 1967) Comedy drama with Dustin Hoffman

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders Barnaby and Troy investigate the murder of a terminally ill property developer (S2, ep1)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat An informant reveals two local hoodlums are planning a gold raid
6.55 Heartbeat A clairvoyant at Whitby Funfair gives a bride-to-be cold feet
8.00 Vera The detective investigates Newcastle's drug underworld to discover the identity of a man found dead in the river
10.00 Midsomer Murders Corpses are found in the middle of crop circles (S4, ep3)
11.55-12.55am Trial & Retribution The body of a teenage girl is discovered (S11, ep9)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Deadly 60
7.30 Deadly 60
8.00 Sort Your Life Out with Stacey Solomon Stacey helps a family from Surrey
9.00 Better Date than Never
9.30 Better Date than Never
10.00-12.05am He Had It Coming Five episodes

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

10.15am Live Test Cricket: England v Pakistan
7.00pm The Transfer Show
7.30 Live EFL: Sheffield Wednesday v Bradford City (Kick-off **8.00**)
10.30 Live PGA Tour Golf The BMW Championship
12.00-4.00am Live Tennis Day eight of the Cincinnati Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Nineties
4.00 Discovering: Jane Fonda A profile
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2023
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Voices of the Valleys The big day has arrived for the three male voice choirs. Last in the series
8.00 Discovering: Mel Gibson The life and career of the Oscar-winning actor and director
9.00 Spymasters: The Great Spy Writers Examining the lives, works and secrets of spy authors in literature and film
10.00-12.20am Billy Idol Should Be Dead A look at the musician's journey from punk rocker to pop star

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

1.35 pm Magnum, PI
2.35 The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes A prowler terrifies a professor's daughter
3.45 Boon Ken is on the brink of quitting the security business
4.50 The Professionals Bodie and Doyle investigate a city's falling crime rate
5.50 Sharpe The disloyal Major Brand tries to dupe Sharpe into helping him betray Ross to the French
8.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special Featuring Carol Vorderman and Charlene White
9.00 Benidorm The Garveys attempt to win a pub quiz
9.30 Benidorm Mick falls victim to a con
10.00 Benidorm
10.30 Benidorm
11.00-12.05am Black Sails Miranda attempts to save the island

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor
8.00 The 1% Club Kids Special Children aged from 9 to 15 take part in the quiz
9.00 Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening
10.00 Changing Ends
10.35 Family Guy
11.05 Family Guy
11.35-12.05am American Dad!

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

12.15pm Live Women's Cycling World Tour Stage two of the Lloyds Tour of Britain
2.45-4.45 Live Men's Cycling World Tour Coverage of stage two of the Renewi Tour
6.00-9.00 Live MLB: Tampa Bay Rays v Toronto Blue Jays (Start-time **6.10**)
11.30-2.30am Live MLB

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me Parties in Hull
3.20 Four in a Bed
3.50 Four in a Bed
4.20 Four in a Bed
4.50 Four in a Bed
5.20 Four in a Bed
5.50 Car S.O.S. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a Caterham 7
6.50 Car S.O.S. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a former soldier's Austin army truck
7.55 Grand Designs A couple decide to build a house heavily inspired by American modernist properties
9.00 24 Hours in A&E Cameras follow a 26-year-old man's treatment after he is hit by a car
10.00 24 Hours in A&E Cameras follow a 10-year-old who has severed his finger
11.05-12.10am 999: On the Front Line

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Classic Neighbours
2.30 Classic Neighbours
3.00 Whitstable Pearl An aging actress is attacked (S2, ep4)
4.05 Lovejoy (S6, ep10)
5.20 As Time Goes By
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S6, ep7)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S7, ep1)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine The trio try to free Wally (S7, ep2)
8.00 The Marlow Murder Club Judith, Becks and Suzie are unable to find anyone with a motive to hurt the Mayor (S3, ep2)
9.00 Father Brown A celebrity florist brings glamour and murder to Kembleford (S10, ep3)
10.00 New Tricks The team reinvestigates the 15-year-old murder of a boxer (S7, ep9)
11.20-12.40am Luther Thriller (S3, ep4)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Blue Planet
8.00 Bangers & Cash
9.00 Dream Car Fixers New series. Sheldon and Will hope a 1969 Ford Corsair will be a dream car for a retired man
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.30pm House of the Dragon Fantasy prequel (S2, ep5)
7.45 House of the Dragon Rhaenyra summons a trusted knight for a venture (S2, ep6)
9.00 Possession (5/5)
10.00-12.05am FILM Promising Young Woman (15, 2020) Crime thriller starring Carey Mulligan

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

12.45 pm Ride Lonesome (12, 1959) Western with Randolph Scott
2.20 Siege of the Saxons (U, 1963) An outlaw defends the throne from invading Saxons when King Arthur is killed by a traitorous knight. Adventure starring Ronald Lewis
4.15 Cleopatra (PG, 1963) The famous Queen schemes to consolidate her power over Egypt in the midst of a conflict for control of the Roman Empire. Historical epic with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton
9.00-12.20am Heat (15, 1995) A detective becomes obsessed with capturing a career criminal who is planning one last robbery before his retirement. Thriller starring Al Pacino and Robert De Niro

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.35 pm By the Dome It's Known Documentary
2.50 FILM First Comes Courage (PG, 1943) Second World War spy drama starring Merle Oberon
4.35 FILM Albert RN (PG, 1953) Fact-based Second World War drama starring Anthony Steel
6.20 Strange But True
6.55 The Brothers
8.00 Mark Saber
8.30 The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club The Kaye Sisters and Malcolm Roberts perform
9.20 FILM Assault (18, 1970) A teacher plays a dangerous game of cat and mouse as she hunts for a vicious rapist. Thriller starring Suzy Kendall
11.10-1.10am FILM Deux Hommes dans la Ville (1973) French crime drama starring Alain Delon

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.00pm World of Stonehenge
7.10 The Last Days of Anne Boleyn A look at the execution
8.25 Pocahontas: Beyond the Myth The life of the Native American princess
9.35 The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship
10.40-12.00 The Last Days of Anne Boleyn Documentary

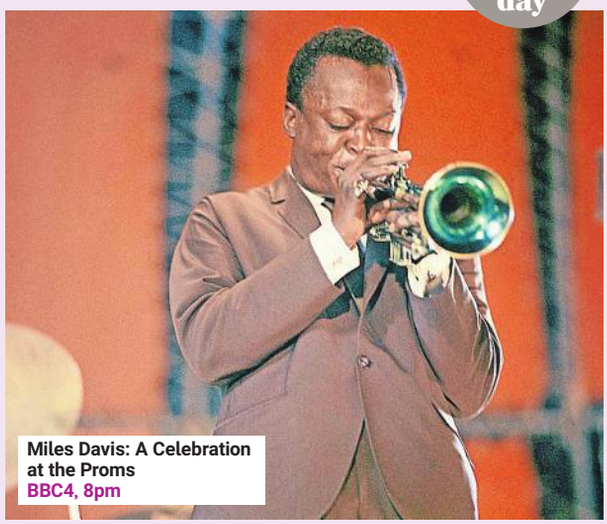
Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm FILM The Alpinist (12, 2021) Documentary
7.50 My Icon: Anthony Joshua Sporting idols
8.00 The United Way
9.50 My Icon: Chris Hughton
10.00 Terry Venables: A Man Can Dream A profile
12.00-2.10am The Alabama Solution The prison system

Friday 21

★ Picks of the day



Miles Davis: A Celebration at the Proms
BBC4, 8pm

A legend of American 20th-century music

The Proms celebrates the centenary of the great American jazz musician, who was born in Alton, Illinois, in 1926. His music teacher mother wanted him to play the violin but it was not to be — a friend of his father gave the nine-year-old Davis a trumpet and his future was secured. Tonight's concert celebrates his influence on American music with a deep dive into the sounds he created with the pianist and arranger Gil Evans, who turned Davis's Juilliard-trained trumpet into an orchestral instrument. The US trumpet virtuoso Ambrose Akinmusire, regarded as the inheritor of the Davis mantle, dominates the evening. He is joined by the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Japanese composer-conductor Miho Hazama. Helen Stewart

You're Killing Me
U&Drama, 8pm

The creator of this Brooke Shields cosy crime vehicle, the writer and producer Robin Bernheim, cut her teeth on the 1980s detective show *Remington Steele*, a stylish and amusing caper starring Stephanie Zimbalist as a detective forced to invent a male boss (winningly played by Pierce Brosnan) to attract clients. Forty years later Bernheim sticks to the formula, casting Shields — a popular writer whose agent has told her she must attract a younger readership — against Amalia Williamson's pushy young podcaster, who is annoyingly au fait with all things Gen Z. As with *Remington Steele*, the two leads need each other to be able to work in a fast-changing world. It's screwball, frenetic, even a little histrionic; tonight a wedding is interrupted by the sudden death of the best man. **HS**

Brooke Shields as Allison Chandler in *You're Killing Me*

Athletics: Diamond League Lausanne
BBC2, 7pm

All eyes are on Team GB's Keely Hodgkinson as the track and field world meets in Switzerland. After a tricky start to the season she's hoping for a repeat of last year's win in the 800m, with her team-mate Georgia Hunter Bell also in the mix. The women's 200m is set to be an edge-of-your-seat affair, with Jamaica's Shericka Jackson in terrific form, while the men's javelin should be very competitive. **Emma Bullimore**

Ann Droid
BBC1, 9.30pm

With Michael unemployed and living back at home, he can't afford the Basic Eldercare Robot Linda (Diane Morgan) and he returns her. Linda had planned a busy week for Sue (Sue Johnston) — it would have been her 50th wedding anniversary — so she gives Michael the itinerary. But when Sue's friends and Michael let her down, she questions whether she can live without Linda. This is the final episode, but there is talk of a second series. **Chris Jervis**

This week's best films on TV Pages 26-27

BBC1

6.00 am Breakfast The latest news
9.30 Countryfile Treasures (r)
10.30 Garden Rescue (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 The Hairdresser Mysteries A mysterious American charms the village. Last in the series
2.45 Escape to the Country Briony May Williams helps a couple to find a new home in Buckinghamshire (r)
3.30 The Repair Shop Experts restore a suit of armour and a pane of stained glass (r)
4.30 The Answer Run Quiz show hosted by Jason Manford
5.15 Pointless Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

Katherine Heigl: 27 Dresses (10.40pm)

7.00 The One Show Angellica Bell and JB Gill present the usual mix of guests and stories
7.30 The Travelling Auctioneers A globetrotter needs help clearing the family home (r)
8.00 Celebrity MasterChef The famous faces work in teams to serve up a three-course meal, before recreating a recipe provided by chef and author Seema Pankhania. At stake is a place in the quarter-finals
9.00 Would I Lie to You? Panellists include Richie Anderson and Chris McCausland (5/9) (r)
9.30 Ann Droid Michael decides to return Linda. Last in the series. **See Pick of the Day**
10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 BBC Regional News
10.40 FILM 27 Dresses (12, 2008) Singleton Jane is literally always the bridesmaid and never the bride, a role she assumes for the 28th time when her sister announces she is getting married — to a man Jane is secretly in love with. As she wrestles with her feelings, Jane's predicament attracts the attention of a reporter fascinated by her story. Romantic comedy starring Katherine Heigl, Malin Akerman and James Marsden
12.25 am Weather for the Week Ahead 12.30 BBC News

BBC2

6.15 am Homes Under the Hammer (r) **7.15 Money for Nothing** (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: A House Through Time In Edinburgh (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News Headlines
1.00 pm Richard Osman's House of Games Quiz show (r)
1.30 The Finish Line Quiz show (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? (r)
2.45 Animal Park Summer The keepers face a tough decision regarding a beloved wolf (r)
3.30 Serengeti II A young cheetah ends up lost when he tries to take on the vultures (r)
4.30 Flog It! From Crathes Castle in Aberdeenshire (r)
5.00 Live Gymnastics: European Championships 2026 Coverage of the third day of the men's event, held at Arena Zagreb in Croatia, where the apparatus finals take place

Professor Hannah Fry (9.50pm)

7.00 Live Athletics: Diamond League Lausanne ★ The Athletissima. Coverage of the 12th meeting of the campaign, held at Stade Olympique de la Pontaise in Switzerland. Great Britain's Keely Hodgkinson won the women's 800m here last year, with home favourite Audrey Werro in second and Hodgkinson's teammate Georgia Hunter Bell third, and another high-quality race is expected this time around. **See Pick of the Day**
9.00 Bergerac The race is on to find Kim before she comes to harm, while Jim has a shocking realisation (6/6)
9.50 The Secret Genius of Modern Life Refrigerators (r)
10.00 QI With Sarah Millican, Daliso Chaponda and Rob Beckett (r)
10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis with Lucy Hockings
11.05 FILM Silent Roar (15, 2023) A teenager refuses to accept that his father, who was lost at sea, is dead and has his hopes encouraged by an eccentric minister. Comedy drama starring Louis McCartney
12.30 am Today at the Test England v Pakistan (r)
1.30 Sign Zone: Child Maintenance: Parents Under Pressure: Panorama (r) (SL)
2.00 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning Celebrity chat
1.00 pm ITV News; Weather
1.30 Live ITV Racing: From York Francesca Cumani and Ed Chamberlin present coverage of the third day of the Ebor Meeting, including feature race the Nunthorpe Stakes. Analysis comes from Jason Weaver, Adele Mulrennan and Ruby Walsh, with commentary by Richard Hoiles
4.30 Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals Two more of the most thrilling endgames from the arcade-themed quiz show (r)
5.00 The Chase Contestants from Sutton Coldfield, London, Falkirk and Stalybridge take on one of the Chasers (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

Jackie Chan in Rush Hour (11.50pm)

7.30 Abbey Clancy: Celebrity Homes With Seema Malhotra and Alice Temperley (5/6) (r)
8.00 Emmerdale Struggling with financial pressures, Jimmy sells his haulage business
8.30 Coronation Street Glenda, Mary and Christina chide Todd for his heavy drinking
9.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special Jeremy Clarkson hosts the quiz in which Laura Kenny and Krishnan Guru-Murthy answer questions to win cash for their chosen charities (r)
10.00 The Twisted Tale of Amanda Knox Free but haunted by Perugia, Amanda must confront the man who branded her a murderer to finally move forward, regardless of the risks (8/8)
11.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; Regional News
11.50 FILM Rush Hour (12, 1998) Comedy adventure starring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker
1.30 am Shop on TV
3.00 Force of Nature Narrated by Andrew Lincoln (r) (SL)
3.50 Long Lost Family (r) (SL)
4.45 Unwind with ITV

Variations

BBC Scotland 7.00pm Reporting Scotland **7.25** Live Sportscene: Inverness Caledonian Thistle v Partick Thistle (Kick-off **7.30**) **9.30** Best of Only an Excuse? (r) **10.00** Still Game. Jack and Victor are left minding Navid's shop (r) **10.30** Two Doors Down (r) **11.00** Situationships with Sophie and Christine (r) **11.30pm-Midnight** Situationships with Sophie and Christine (r)

BBC1 Wales 7.30-8.00pm Best of Weatherman Walking. Derek Brockway delves into Wales's industrial past **BBC1 N Ireland 7.00-8.00pm** The Big Deal with Steph McGovern (r) **10.40 FILM Monkey Man (2024) 12.35-6.00am** News

This week's live sport
Page 25

Declan Rice and Arsenal begin their title defence with a clash against Coventry
Sky Main Event, k/o 8pm

Channel 4

6.30 am The King of Queens (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r)
9.10 Frasier American sitcom (r)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA From New Jersey (r)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway (r)
2.10 Countdown With Debbie McGee in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun Searching for a holiday home near Puerto del Carmen, Lanzarote (r)
4.00 The Great B&B Challenge The first couple is eliminated (r)
5.00 Château DIY A fairy-tale turret reveals a rotten secret (r)
6.00 Formula 1 Dutch Grand Prix Sprint Qualifying Highlights Action from the battle for sprint race positions in the 12th round of the season
6.30 A Place in the Sun (r)

Surgery Secrets of the Super Rich (8pm)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Surgery Secrets of the Super Rich A Cheshire-based woman undergoes a non-surgical skin tightening treatment, and an entrepreneur invests in the growing trend of fat banking. Last in the series

9.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Jimmy Carr hosts the comedy words-and-numbers quiz, with Jon Richardson and Judi Love taking on Rob Beckett and Katherine Parkinson (r)

10.00 Big Fat Quiz: Best Bits An hour of outbursts, meltdowns and Big Fat tantrums, as some of the biggest names in British entertainment take on the toughest quiz in television

11.05 Sarah Millican: Bobby Dazzler A stand-up special in which the comedian explains the best way to eat a kiwi fruit, and the experience of undergoing a surprisingly funny smear test (r)

12.10 am FILM **Sumotherhood (15, 2023)** Comedy drama
1.50 Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives (r) (SL) **2.40 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA** (r) (SL)
3.30 Travel Man (r) (SL)
3.55 Come Dine with Me (r)

5

6.00 am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion
12.45 pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate
2.20 FILM **Stranger in My Home (U, TVM, 2023)** A woman needs a new roommate to supplement the rent, and finds something strange is going on with the tenant who moves in. Thriller starring Angela Cole
4.00 Castle Part two of two. Beckett is launched into a fight for her life with a team of mercenaries hot on her trail (r)
4.55 Love Nature The group trying to restore Lough Neagh (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Croatia: Jewel of the Med A look at Hvar, the Croatian island in the Adriatic Sea (r)
6.55 5 News Update

Alexander Armstrong in Sri Lanka (8pm)

7.00 Tom Read Wilson's Grand Tour Tom embarks on a scenic journey through Tuscany in a vintage Lancia, arriving in Florence (3/3) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Alexander Armstrong in Sri Lanka The presenter embarks on the second leg of his Sri Lankan adventure, beginning with a train journey to the mountain town of Haputale (2/3) (r)

9.00 Heat Two families of British ex-pats reunite in Victoria, Australia, for a summer holiday, with dramatic results. Drama starring Danny Dyer, Pia Miranda and Darren McMullen (1/4) (r)

10.05 Heat Word of the fires spreading adds extra anxiety to the household, except for Brad who insists the property isn't in danger. Australian thriller starring Danny Dyer (2/4) (r)

11.05 Piers Morgan: Uncensored The bold, opinion-led news and debate show hosted by the broadcaster

1.00 am Cruise TV (r)
2.00 GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r)
2.50 Castle (r) **3.40 Friends** (r)
4.35 The Highland Vet (r) (SL)
5.25 Entertainment News on 5
5.35 Paw Patrol (r) (SL) **5.45 The Adventures of Paddington** (r)

STV 1.30-4.29pm Live STV Racing: From York **7.00** The STV Radio Football Takeover **7.30-8.00** What's on Scotland **1.30-3.00am** Shop on TV **4.45-6.00am** Unwind with STV
UTV 7.00pm UTV Life **7.30-8.00pm** Hidden Northern Ireland. Campbell college archives

S4C 5.00pm Stwnsh (r) **6.30** Garddio a Mwy (r) **7.00** Heno **7.30** News **8.00** Mike Bubbins: Un Mewn Miliwn. Discussing Welsh music with Nick Yeo, Daniel Minty and Aleighcia Scott (r) **8.55** News **9.00** Am Dro! (r) **10.00** Y Deis (r) **10.30-11.35** Miwsig Fy Mywyd (r)

BBC4

FV 9/24, FS 108, SKY 116, VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Today at the Test England v Pakistan. The third day of the first Test in the three-match series, held at Headingley Cricket Ground
8.00 Miles Davis: A Celebration at the Proms A tribute to the legendary trumpeter to mark what would have been his centenary in 2026. **See Pick of the Day**
9.15 TOTP: 1982 Featuring Captain Sensible, Kids from Fame, Soft Cell and Duran Duran
9.55 TOTP: 1987 Performers include Wax, Five Star, Sherrick and Bon Jovi
10.25 Nick Lowe: BBC Four Sessions The singer performs an acoustic set at LSO St Luke's
11.25-12.25am k.d. lang: BBC Four Sessions The country singer performs at LSO St Luke's in London

ITV3

FV 10, FS 115, SKY 119, VIRGIN 117

1.35 pm Midsomer Murders A woman is strangled where three similar killings occurred nine years previously (S2, ep2)
3.35 Classic Emmerdale
4.40 Classic Coronation Street Double bill
5.50 Heartbeat Liz's past catches up with her
6.55 Heartbeat A mysterious sniper heads for Aidensfield and murders Liz's ex-boyfriend
8.00 Doc Martin Martin has to complete three refresher courses (S9, ep2)
9.00 Doc Martin Ruth is concerned about becoming increasingly forgetful (S9, ep3)
10.00 Lewis A botanist accidentally unearths a body (S6, ep1)
11.50-1.45am Trial & Retribution An ambulance is run off the road (S12, ep1)

BBC3

FV 23, FS 107, SKY 115, VIRGIN 107

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.10 Deadly 60
7.40 FILM **Chicken Run (U, 2000)** Animated comedy featuring the voices of Mel Gibson and Julia Sawalha
9.00 Death in Paradise A man is shot dead at his villa
10.00 Not Going Out
10.55-12.20am This Country

Sky Main Event

SKY 401, VIRGIN 501, EE 439

10.30am Live Test Cricket: England v Pakistan
6.30pm Live FNF: Arsenal v Coventry City (Kick-off **8.00**). The opening match of the Premier League season
11.00 Live PGA Tour Golf The BMW Championship
12.00-4.00am Live Tennis Day nine of the Cincinnati Open

Sky Arts

FV 36, FS 143, SKY 122, VIRGIN 123

2.00 pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour
3.00 The Nineties
4.00 Discovering: Peter Finch A profile
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2023
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
6.30 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
7.30 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 Guy Garvey: From the Vaults Tina Turner's career reaches new heights thanks to The Tube
9.00 Queen: Champions of the World The rock band tell their story in their own words, with interviews and performance footage
11.40-1.40am FILM **Brian Wilson: Long Promised Road (15, 2021)** The Beach Boys star reflects on his legendary career

ITV4

FV 26, FS 117, SKY 120, VIRGIN 118

2.00 pm River Monsters
2.30 Magnum, PI Thomas investigates a judge
3.40 Boon Harry takes possession of a run-down hotel
4.45 The Professionals Bodie and Doyle quiz their former mentor
5.50 Sharpe Framed by long-time enemy Ducos for stealing Napoleon's treasures, Sharpe is abandoned by his wife Jane
8.00 Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Celebrity Special Big-prize quiz with Jason Watkins and Ranvir Singh
9.00 FILM **RoboCop 3 (18, 1993)** The cyborg joins rebel forces fighting against a corporation's sinister plans for the city of Detroit. Sci-fi thriller sequel starring Robert Burke
11.05-1.05am All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite Hard-hitting action

ITV2

FV 6, FS 113, SKY 118, VIRGIN 115

7.00pm The Floor The 17 remaining contestants fight for a spot in the final
8.00 The 1% Club Valentine's Special An edition in which couples and singles play
9.00-12.25am FILM **The Batman (15, 2022)** Comic-book drama starring Robert Pattinson and Zoë Kravitz

TNT Sports 1

NO SKY, VIRGIN 521, EE 430

11.30am-3.00pm Live Women's Cycling World Tour The Lloyds Tour of Britain
3.30-6.00 Live UCI Mountain Bike World Series
9.00 Live MLB: Milwaukee Brewers v Atlanta Braves (Start-time **9.10**)
12.00m't-3.45am Live CPL
4.00-7.00am Live AFL

More 4

FV 18, FS 124, SKY 136, VIRGIN 147

1.40 pm Come Dine with Me Paralympics Special Dinner parties
3.20 Four in a Bed
3.50 Four in a Bed
4.20 Four in a Bed
4.50 Four in a Bed
5.20 Four in a Bed
5.50 Car S.O.S. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a Mazda RX-7
6.50 Car S.O.S. Tim Shaw and Fuzz Townshend get help from actor James Nesbitt
7.55 Grand Designs Building a radical, self-heating family home — the first of its kind in the UK
9.00 Carpe Diem A woman asks Tom to defend her husband on a murder charge
10.05 24 Hours in A&E A mechanic is crushed against a wall by his own car
11.10-12.15am 24 Hours in A&E A five-year-old struggles to breathe

U&Drama

FV 20, FS 158, SKY 143, VIRGIN 116

2.00 pm Classic Neighbours
2.35 Classic Neighbours
3.05 Whitstable Pearl (S2, ep5)
4.10 Kingdom (S1, ep1)
5.20 As Time Goes By
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine (S7, ep3)
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine (S7, ep4)
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Compo, Clegg and Foggy take part in a concert (S7, ep5)
8.00 You're Killing Me New series. Crime mystery series starring Brooke Shields and Amalia Jane Williamson. **See Pick of the Day** (1/6)
9.00 Father Brown A mythical wild cat features in the cleric's latest investigation (S10, ep4)
10.00 New Tricks The future of the team is threatened (S7, ep10)
11.20-12.40am Luther Thriller (S4, ep1)

U&Yesterday

FV 27, FS 159, SKY 155, VIRGIN 129

7.00pm The Blue Planet
8.00 Canal Boat Diaries Robbie investigates a local UFO legend in Todmorden
9.00 Canal Boat Diaries The scenic Oxford Canal
10.00 Bangers & Cash
11.00 Bangers & Cash
12.00-1.00am Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108, VIRGIN 111, EE 342

6.30pm House of the Dragon Fantasy drama (S2, ep7)
7.45 House of the Dragon Larys hatches a plan (S2, ep8)
9.00 Station Eleven An argument sends Jeevan on an unexpected path (9/10)
10.05 Station Eleven (10/10)
11.20-12.35am House of the Dragon Fantasy (S2, ep6)

Film4

FV 14, FS 300, SKY 313, VIRGIN 428

1.10 pm Enemy Mine (12, 1985) Sci-fi adventure starring Dennis Quaid and Louis Gossett Jr
3.25 River of No Return (PG, 1954) Western starring Robert Mitchum and Marilyn Monroe
5.15 Deck the Halls (PG, 2006) Christmas comedy starring Danny DeVito and Matthew Broderick
7.05 Flamin' Hot (12, 2023) Comedy drama starring Jesse Garcia and Annie Gonzalez
9.00 Honest Thief (15, 2020) A bank robber falls in love, and decides to turn himself in, only to be betrayed by two crooked FBI agents. Crime thriller starring Liam Neeson and Kate Walsh
11.05-1.10am The Forever Purge (15, 2021) Horror sequel with Ana de la Reguera

TPTV

FV 82, FS 306, SKY 324, VIRGIN 445

1.05 pm The Edgar Wallace Mystery Theatre Drama
2.15 The Adventures of Robin Hood
2.50 FILM **Ghost Ship (U, 1952)** Horror starring Hazel Court
4.30 The Cheaters
5.00 A Family at War Philip captures a German soldier
6.00 Rumpole of the Bailey The lawyer defends an MP accused of sexual assault
7.00 Z Cars A recently promoted superintendent lets Barlow take the blame for his failure
8.00 Public Eye Frank uncovers some strange discoveries about a doctor's wife
9.05 FILM **Mort D'un Pourri (12, 1977)** Crime thriller starring Alain Delon
11.40-12.45am Supernatural

PBS America

FV 84, FS 155, SKY 173, VIRGIN 187

6.05pm World of Stonehenge
7.15 The Real Truth
8.20 Pandemic: The Flu That Killed 50 Million Docu-drama about the 1918 Flu pandemic
9.40 Hidden Killers of the Post-War Home Documentary
10.55 The Real Truth
12.00-1.15am Pandemic: The Flu That Killed 50 Million

Sky Documentaries

SKY 114, VIRGIN 121, EE 352

6.00pm I'm Chevy Chase and You're Not A profile of the actor and comedian
8.00 Becoming Madonna The singer's rise to stardom
10.00 God Bless Ozzy Osbourne A profile of the Black Sabbath frontman
12.00-2.15am Mr Dynamite: The Rise of James Brown

Radio

Your seven-day listening guide and critics' choice

Saturday 15 August

TIMES RADIO
6.00am Rosie Wright and Calum Macdonald **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Jane Mulkerrins **4.00** Nick Wallis **7.00** Highlights from Times Radio **10.00** Darryl Morris **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.00am Sounds of the 60s **8.00** Dermot O'Leary **10.00** Josh Widdicombe **1.00pm** Emma Willis **3.00** Rylan on Saturday **6.00** Sounds of the 80s **8.00** Sounds of the 90s **10.00** Dance Sounds of the 90s (r) **11.00** Alternative Sounds of the 90s

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.00 Saturday Morning **12.00** Earlier… with Jools Holland. With Jasper Conran (r) **1.00pm** Key Changes: Radio 3's Essential History of Classical Music. The impact of Beethoven's *Razumovsky* Quartets **2.00** Record Review. Copland **4.00** Sound of Cinema. With Julia Donaldson **5.00** This Classical Life. With the composer Tansy Davies **6.00** Music Planet. Highlights from this year's Womad festival **7.00** New Generation Artists. The Kleio Quartet and Berniya Hamie play Webern and Mahler **7.30** Live BBC Proms 2026. Antonio Pappano conducts the LSO in Berlioz's *Requiem* **9.45** Talking Music. Kate Molleson talks to Jamie Barton **10.30** New Music Show **12.30am** Through the Night

Fork in the Road
Radio 4, 3pm

The latest in the station's series of dramas depicting alternative histories is Ben Cottam's *Cherie on Top*, which reimagines the careers of Tony and Cherie Blair (Kate O'Flynn and Kieran Hodgson). What would have happened if they had each run for the other's constituency in 1983 and she, not him, had become an MP? Might Cherie, *above*, have become Labour leader?

RADIO 4
5.30am News Summary **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Living on the Edge (r) **6.00** News and Papers **6.07** This Natural Life (6/6) (r) **6.30** Farming Today This Week **7.00** Today. Headlines **9.00** What Happened to Counter-Culture? Insights (r) **9.30** What's Up Docs? Why some people find it difficult to relax (r) **10.00** You're Dead to Me **10.30** Soul Music. A new run starts with *Rasputin* by Boney M **11.00** Radical (r) **11.30** From Our Own Correspondent. Stories **12.04pm** Toast. Examining the failure of Paperchase (r) **12.30** The People Have Spoken (r) **1.00** News **1.10** Any Questions? (r) **2.05** Any Answers? Phone-in **2.45** The Archers (r) **3.00** Drama: Fork in the Road — Cherie on Top. By Ben Cottam **4.00** Weekend Woman's Hour **5.00** Saturday PM **5.30** Sliced Bread (r) **5.54** Shipping Forecast **6.00** Six O'Clock News **6.15** Loose Ends. From Crossed Wires Festival in Sheffield **7.00** Last Word: Doing Death Differently. Matthew Bannister on dealing with possessions and a digital legacy (r) **7.15** Changing the Odds (3/3) (r) **8.00** Archive on 4: Fidel Castro — Beyond La Revolucion. Will Grant explores what the future holds for Cuba **9.00** Ten Fights That Made the Green Movement. Omnibus of the final five episodes (r) **10.00** News **10.15** The Food Programme (r) **11.00** Olga Koch: OK Computer. Olga and Algo discuss what friendship means (r) **11.30** Brain of Britain (r) **12.00** Midnight News **12.15am** Take Four Books (r) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service

Sunday 16 August

TIMES RADIO
6.00am Salma El-Wardany and Calum Macdonald **10.00** Adam Boulton **1.00pm** Ryan Tubridy **4.00** Nick Wallis with Times Radio Drive. With Nick Blood **7.00** Highlights from Times Radio **10.00** Darryl Morris **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.00am Good Morning Sunday **9.00** Love Songs **11.00** Paddy McGuinness **1.00pm** Elaine Paige on Sunday **3.00** Sounds of the 70s **5.00** Pick of the Pops **7.00** Tony Blackburn **8.00** Paul Gambaccini **10.00** Unwinds

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.00 Sunday Morning. Holst's folk song *I Love My Love* **11.00** Live BBC Proms 2026. The Swedish Chamber Orchestra explores the evolution of dance **1.30pm** Music Map. *Wild Swans* by Elena Kats-Chernin **3.00** The Colours in Sound, with Caroline Shaw (r) **4.00** Jazz Record Requests **5.00** The Early Music Show. A concert by the Bellot Ensemble at Beverley and East Riding Early Music Festival **6.00** Choral Evensong (r) **7.00** New Generation Artists. Lukas Sternath plays Schubert **7.30** Live BBC Proms 2026. The Royal Phil and Pablo Ferrández in Elgar's Cello Concerto **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** Unclassified (r) **12.30am** Through the Night (r)

BBC Proms
Radio 3, 7.30pm

Vasily Petrenko and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra perform a live concert of 20th-century music, with Elgar's Cello Concerto in E minor, played by the Spanish cellist Pablo Ferrández, *above*, making his Proms debut. The programme also includes the Austrian modernist Anton Webern's Passacaglia from 1908 and William Walton's Symphony No 2, first performed in 1960.

RADIO 4
5.30am News Summary **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Bells on Sunday **5.45** In Touch (r) **6.00** News Headlines **6.05** Heart and Soul (r) **6.35** On Your Farm **7.00** News and Papers **7.10** Sunday **7.54** Radio 4 Appeal **8.00** News and Papers **8.10** Sunday Worship **8.48** Witness History (r) **8.58** Tweet of the Day **9.00** Broadcasting House **10.00** Desert Island Discs **11.00** The Archers. Omnibus (r) **12.15pm** Last Word: Doing Death Differently. Digital legacies (r) **12.30** Just a Minute (r) **1.00** The World This Weekend **1.30** Pride Before the Fall **2.00** Gardeners' Question Time. Listeners' queries (r) **2.45** Opening Lines. Don DeLillo's 1988 novel *Libra* (2/2) **3.00** Drama: Libra (2/2) **4.00** Take Four Books **4.30** Brain of Britain **5.00** Witness History (r) **5.10** Behind the Crime (r) **5.54** Shipping Forecast **6.00** Six O'Clock News **6.15** Pick of the Week. Highlights **7.00** The Archers. Alarm bells start to ring for Azra **7.15** The Grand North Atlantic Home Video Archive. Séamas O'Reilly on his father's films **7.45** Just One Thing (r) **8.00** Feedback (r) **8.30** Last Word (r) **9.00** Toast (r) **9.26** Radio 4 Appeal (r) **9.30** From Our Own Correspondent (r) **10.00** Marlon Brando: The Ultimate Contender (r) **11.00** Great Lives (r) **11.30** Hoax (r) **11.45** Short Works (r) **12.00** News and Weather **12.15am** Crossing Continents (r) **12.45** Bells on Sunday (r) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service

Tuesday 18 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Rosie Wright and Stig Abell. With William Hague **10.00** Hugo Rifkin. With Carlo Rovelli and Charlotte Higgins **1.00pm** The Times at One with Jo Coburn **2.00** Jane Garvey **4.00** Carolyn Quinn with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Darryl Morris with The Evening Edition **10.00** Olly Mann **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Jason Manford **7.00** Prom Nights on Radio 2 **9.00** The Jazz Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live. Featuring a performance of Gershwin's Piano Concerto with Yeol Eum Son and Bach's Toccata & Fugue from organist Olivier Latry **4.00** Composer of the Week: Felix Mendelssohn. The composer's first visit to London **5.00** In Tune. Arts news **7.00** Live BBC Proms 2026. From the Royal Albert Hall, the BBC SO, conducted by Cristian Macelaru, in Shostakovich's Symphony No 10, plus Édith Canat de Chizy's *Skyline* **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight. Gretchen Parlato spotlights an American singer-songwriter and guitarist **12.30am** Through the Night

In the Studio
World Service, 1.30pm

Antonia Quirke goes behind the scenes of a new series of U&Alibi's *Bookish*, the murder mystery series starring Mark Gatiss, *above*, as Gabriel Book, a bookshop owner who turns to solving crimes in postwar London. She visits the co-writer Matthew Sweet as he works on the script and works out how many red herrings each plot should contain, and details his working relationship with Gatiss.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary **5.04** Pride Before the Fall (r) **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **6.00** Today. Headlines **9.00** Invisible Hands. The academic who led America to disaster in Vietnam **9.30** Michael Sheen Gets into Character. Exploring methods used to get into character (r) **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** Add to Playlist (r) **11.45** Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People. By Helena Attlee **12.04pm** Call You and Yours **1.00** The World at One **1.45** Human Intelligence. Dali **2.00** The Archers (r) **2.15** Drama: No, Prime Minister. Written by Mark Burgess **3.00** Lady on Trial with Lucy Worsley (10/10) **3.30** Heart and Soul (r) **4.00** The Deadliest Book in England. A small book that shaped history and language **4.30** What's Up Docs? Crying **5.00** PM. With Katie Razzall **6.00** Six O'Clock News **6.30** Paul Sinha's Perfect Pub Quiz. Quiz show **7.00** The Archers. Susan puts her foot in it **7.15** Front Row. Arts programme **8.00** Saving Young Men from Murder: The Homeboy Story. A visit to the largest gang rehabilitation charity in the world **8.40** In Touch **9.00** Crossing Continents. New York's antiques trafficking unit **9.30** Scam Secrets (r) **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Mr Sidhu's Post Office. By Amman Brar **11.00** Wild Inside (r) **11.30** Poetry Please (r) **12.00** News and Weather **12.30am** Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People (2/5) (r) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service

Wednesday 19 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Rosie Wright and Stig Abell. With Edwina Currie **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** The Times at One with Jo Coburn **2.00** Jane Garvey **4.00** Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Darryl Morris with The Evening Edition **10.00** Olly Mann **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Jason Manford **7.00** Prom Nights on Radio 2 **9.00** The Folk Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live. Linton Stephens introduces Samuel Barber's Symphony No 1 from the BBC Proms **3.00** Choral Evensong. Music by Bairstow, Jackson and Stanford **4.00** Composer of the Week: Felix Mendelssohn. Following Mendelssohn through Scottish Highlands and Welsh rainstorms **5.00** In Tune. Arts news **7.00** Live BBC Proms 2026. Andrew McGregor resents Glyndebourne Festival Opera, conducted by Robin Ticciati, in a semi-staged performance of Strauss's opera within an opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos* **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30am** Through the Night

Route 66: America's Greatest Road Trip
podcast

The highway that runs from Chicago to Santa Monica was commissioned in 1926, and to celebrate its centenary the journalist Sean Fletcher hosts a series on the road's history. He meets characters from along the road and talks to guests with memories of travelling on it. These include the rocker Suzi Quatro, *above*, talking about touring America over six decades.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary **5.04** BBC Inside Science (r) **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **6.00** Today.Headlines **9.00** Sideways. Author Matthew Syed explores the ideas that shape individuals' lives (6/8) **9.30** Breakin' the Cycle. Colin takes over directing the movie **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** Saving Young Men from Murder: The Homeboy Story (r) **11.40** This Week in History **11.45** Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People. By Helena Attlee **12.04pm** You and Yours **1.00** The World at One **1.45** Human Intelligence. Delving into the mind of Sigmund Freud **2.00** The Archers (r) **2.15** Drama: United Kingdoms. Short plays (5/5) (r) **3.00** The Grand North Atlantic Home Video Archive (r) **3.30** All Under One Magnetosphere (r) **4.00** The Power of Guilt (r) **4.15** The Media Show **5.00** PM. With Adam Fleming **6.00** Six O'Clock News **6.30** Best Medicine. Stephen Bailey explains how fighting improved his confidence **7.00** The Archers. The Malik family have a bone to pick **7.15** Front Row. Arts programme **8.00** The Moral Maze. New run **9.00** Invisible Hands (r) **9.30** Michael Sheen Gets into Character (r) **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Mr Sidhu's Post Office. By Amman Brar **11.00** Nora Meadows' Week of Wellness (r) **11.15** Follow the Rabbit (4/5) (r) **11.30** Poetry Please (r) **12.00** News and Weather **12.30am** Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People (3/5) (r) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service

Margaret Thatcher performing a short sketch with Nigel Hawthorne and Paul Eddington

Pick of the Week

Drama on 4:
No, Prime Minister
Tuesday, Radio 4, 2.15pm

When Thatcher did Yes Minister

No, Prime Minister is Mark Burgess's comedy drama based on the moment in 1984 when the *Yes Minister* fangirl Margaret Thatcher (Fenella Woolgar) appeared in a radio sketch based on the political sitcom. The cast were not delighted, not least as the sketch was to be written by Thatcher's advisers. And despite their efforts to show her sense of humour, it was clear she didn't have one. *Yes Minister*'s Paul Eddington, Nigel Hawthorne and Derek Fowlds are played by Miles Jupp, Richard Attlee and James Joyce. **Clair Woodward**

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Monday 17 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Rosie Wright and Stig Abell. With Andrew Neil **10.00** Hugo Rifkind. With the novelistand filmmaker Irvine Welsh **1.00pm** The Times at One with Jo Coburn **2.00** Jane Garvey **4.00** Carolyn Quinn with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Darryl Morris with The Evening Edition **10.00** Neil Breakwell **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Clara Amfo **4.00** Jason Manford **7.00** Prom Nights on Radio 2 **9.00** Blues Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live. The Los Angeles Philharmonic in Beethoven's Symphony No 7
4.00 Composer of the Week: Felix Mendelssohn. Kate Molleson charts the composer's journeys across Europe
5.00 In Tune. Arts news
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. Alexandra Humphreys presents live from the Royal Albert Hall as Ryan Bancroft conducts the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the clarinetist Anthony McGill in Copland, Gabriel Kahane and Stravinsky
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight. With Gretchen Parlato's Flowers
12.30am Through the Night

The Great Crime Mystery
Radio 4, 9am

The former BBC home editor Mark Easton, *above*, returns with a series looking at the huge fall in both violent crime and property crime in Britain over the past 30 years, which may come as a surprise. The programme reveals that 80 per cent of the public still think that crime is on the rise. Easton believes that the true statistics have been routinely ignored, dismissed or denied.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 Last Word (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Healdines
9.00 The Great Crime Mystery. New series. Public perceptions of the crime rate
9.30 How Did We Get Here: No World Order. The financial crash and the Arab Spring
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 Behind the Crime. A look at how gaming almost led to 100 years in a US prison (3/3)
11.45 Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People. By Helena Attlee
12.04pm You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Human Intelligence. New series. Naomi Alderman on ancient Roman statesman Cicero
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Alone. By Moray Hunter (r)
2.45 Opening Lines. (2/2) (r)
3.00 Great Lives. Poly Styrene
3.30 You're Dead to Me (r)
4.00 Pride Before the Fall (r)
4.30 Soul Music (r)
5.00 PM. With Katie Razzall
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Just a Minute. With Paul Merton, Zoe Lyons, Catherine Bohart and Paterson Joseph
7.00 The Archers. Emotions start to run high for Lynda
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 The Briefing Room (r)
8.30 BBC Inside Science (r)
9.00 The Great Crime Mystery (r)
9.30 How Did We Get Here: No World Order (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Mr Sidhu's Post Office. By Amman Brar
11.00 Intimacy. Liza faces serious consequences (4/4)
11.30 Poetry Please (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People (1/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Thursday 20 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Rosie Wright and Stig Abell **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** The Times at One with Jo Coburn **2.00** Jane Garvey **4.00** Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Darryl Morris with The Evening Edition **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Jason Manford **7.00** Prom Nights on Radio 2 **9.00** Country Show **10.00** The Good Groove

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics. A selection of classical music
1.00pm Classical Live. Linton Stephens introduces highlights from the BBC Proms, including Stravinsky's ballet *Petrushka*, and Copland's *Billy the Kid*
4.00 Composer of the Week: Felix Mendelssohn. Kate Molleson follows Mendelssohn's grand tour through Venice, Rome and Naples
5.00 In Tune. Arts news
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. From the Royal Albert Hall, Miho Hazama and the BBC Concert Orchestra are joined by trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire in a tribute to jazz star Miles Davis in his centenary year
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night (r)

This Cultural Life
Radio 4, 11am

Sebastian Faulks's new novel, *Farewell to Eden*, is published next month, and he talks to John Wilson about his creative influences and the book's theme of faith. Faulks, *above*, also discusses his mother, Pamela, who infused her son's life with a love of books and music, and was an amateur playwright who would send her work to the BBC but always had it rejected.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 Sideways (6/8) (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics. A look at the murder of Regilla in 160 AD
9.30 The Guitar Story. John Wilson on how the instrument has driven cultural change
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 This Cultural Life. New series. John Wilson talks to the author Sebastian Faulks
11.45 Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People. By Helena Attlee
12.04pm Scam Secrets
12.32 Sliced Bread (8/8)
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Human Intelligence. How Eugène-François Vidocq pioneered modern policing
2.00 The Archers. The Malik family have a bone to pick (r)
2.15 Drama: The Observer's Book. By Amanda Daltion
3.00 Open Country. New series. Learning ancient skills in Dorset
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
3.30 The Metaphor Consultant (r)
4.00 The Briefing Room
4.30 BBC Inside Science
5.00 PM. With Katie Razzall
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Icklewick FM (r)
7.00 The Archers. Robert is pushed to the limit
7.15 Front Row. Arts programme
8.00 At Your Own Peril (r)
8.15 The Media Show (r)
9.00 Loose Ends (r)
9.45 The Cows Are Mad (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Mr Sidhu's Post Office. By Amman Brar
11.00 Radical. Conversations
11.30 Poetry Please (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People (4/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Friday 21 August

TIMES RADIO
5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Rosie Wright and Calum Macdonald **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Ryan Tubridy **4.00** Cathy Newman with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Geoff Norcott **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

RADIO 2
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Jason Manford **7.00** Michelle Visage **9.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor **11.00** The Rock Show with Shaun Keaveny

RADIO 3
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics. A selection of classical music
1.00pm Classical Live. Linton Stephens presents highlights from the BBC Proms, including Shostakovich's 10th Symphony from the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and highlights from the Edinburgh Festival
4.00 Composer of the Week: Felix Mendelssohn. Kate Molleson follows the composer's homecoming
5.00 In Tune. Arts news
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026. The BBC Philharmonic and Anja Bihlmaier are joined by Jamie Barton and Clay Hilley for Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Presented by Martin Handley from the Royal Albert Hall
10.00 Late Junction
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Heart and Soul
World Service, 1.30pm

In *The Vatican's AI Battle*, Isobel Cockerell looks at how Pope Leo XIV and the Vatican have emerged as a most powerful voice against artificial intelligence, questioning the tech bros about the future they plan. In Rome she meets Father Michael Baggot, a Catholic priest and professor who teaches courses on AI and ethics at Vatican universities, and who sees both sides of the argument.

RADIO 4
5.00am News Summary
5.04 The Briefing Room (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today. Headlines
9.00 Desert Island Discs (r)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 The Food Programme
11.45 Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain: Sicily, Etna and her People. By Helena Attlee
12.04pm Rare Earth
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Human Intelligence. How Elinor Ostrom disproved the "tragedy of the commons"
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Central Intelligence. By Greg Haddrick (7/10)
2.45 Living on the Edge (r)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time. Listeners' queries
3.30 Short Works. *Song of the Ocean* by Natasha Carthew
4.00 Last Word. Obituaries
4.30 Sideways (6/8) (r)
5.00 PM. With Katie Razzall
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 The People Have Spoken. Ian Smith is joined by Bella Hull and Ashley Storrie
7.00 The Archers. There's a surprising development for Lily
7.15 Add to Playlist. A celebration of the BBC Proms
8.00 Any Questions? Topical discussion from Medway Centre, Bakewell, Derbyshire
8.55 This Week in History (r)
9.00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics (r)
9.30 Breakin' the Cycle (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Mr Sidhu's Post Office. By Amman Brar
11.00 Americast. Analysis of stories breaking in the US
11.30 All Under One Magnetosphere (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week: The Fire in the Mountain — Sicily, Etna and her People (5/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

MindGames

Samurai Sudoku No 1041 Medium

6			1						5	4		7		9	2	
1	2		4		3	8						8		5		3
		3			8		7		3	2	9		9			6
7					9			1		9	4		1			
	8	5	7		1	2	6			3		5		6		9
4			2				8						9		3	8
	3		6				7	2		3					7	3 9
		1	9		4				1		9		4	7		
					5				5					1		5 8
				1		9				3						
						5	6		4	1						
						6				5		8				
4	9		7						6			8				
			5		9			4		3			2		9	4
7	5	6							1		5	6			1		7
	3	1		2								1			6		8
	4		3		6		1						6	7	9	3	2 1
				5		6	4					4			1		7
9						1	3	7		4		5			3		
5		7	1		3						6	4		2		8 5
	1	4			7		5	2						8		1

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Our five-grid Sudoku will test your powers of logic and elimination — against the clock. Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length but the interlocking boxes give you more clues — and more complexity! Remember — don't try to solve each Sudoku grid in turn, the puzzle has to be tackled as a whole.

Solution to last week's Samurai Sudoku No 1040

2	5	4	7	6	9	3	8	1		1	6	2	7	8	9	4	5	3
6	1	3	2	8	4	9	7	5		7	9	3	4	5	6	2	8	1
8	9	7	3	1	5	4	2	6		5	8	4	3	1	2	9	7	6
3	8	1	9	4	7	5	6	2		4	2	9	6	7	1	5	3	8
5	7	9	8	2	6	1	4	3		6	5	8	2	4	3	7	1	9
4	6	2	5	3	1	8	9	7		3	7	1	5	9	8	6	4	2
1	2	6	4	5	8	7	3	9	4	8	6	2	1	5	8	6	7	3
9	4	5	6	7	3	2	1	8	5	3	7	9	4	6	1	3	5	8
7	3	8	1	9	2	6	5	4	9	2	1	8	3	7	9	2	4	1
						8	7	6	2	5	3	4	9	1				
						3	9	5	1	6	4	7	8	2				
						4	2	1	8	7	9	5	6	3				
4	2	3	9	5	6	1	8	7	3	9	2	6	5	4	7	2	8	1	9	3
9	7	6	8	3	1	5	4	2	6	1	8	3	7	9	5	6	1	2	8	4
1	8	5	7	2	4	9	6	3	7	4	5	1	2	8	3	4	9	7	6	5
3	1	9	4	8	7	2	5	6				8	4	5	1	3	2	6	7	9
8	6	4	2	9	5	3	7	1				9	6	3	8	7	5	4	2	1
7	5	2	1	6	3	8	9	4				7	1	2	6	9	4	3	5	8
5	9	7	3	4	2	6	1	8				5	3	1	2	8	7	9	4	6
6	3	1	5	7	8	4	2	9				4	8	7	9	1	6	5	3	2
2	4	8	6	1	9	7	3	5				2	9	6	4	5	3	8	1	7

Stuck on Samurai, KenKen, Killer or Sudoku? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Word Watch

By David Parfitt

Etesian
a. Occurring periodically
b. An upward flowing well
c. Of pre-Roman Italy

Deke
a. A feint in ice hockey
b. A tiny antelope
c. A breach in a dam

Theopneust
a. Divinely inspired
b. A regular tea drinker
c. A patient under treatment

Frustum
a. An irksome obstacle
b. A soothing voice
c. A part or portion

Solution on page 46

Polygon

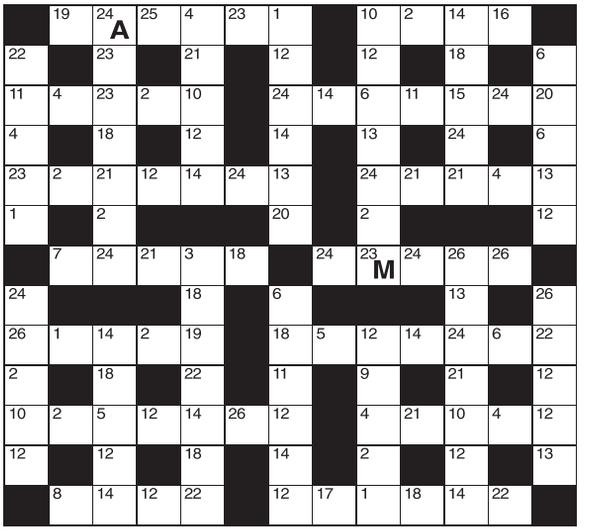
By Roger Phillips

Using the given letters no more than once, make as many words as possible of four or more letters, always including the central letter. Capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives are disallowed.

How you rate: 20 words average; 27, good; 30, very good; 34, excellent.

Friday's solution on page 46. Today's solution in MindGames on Monday

Codeword No 5920



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

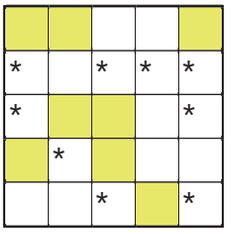
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
									M	A		

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid. Proper nouns are excluded.

Stuck on Codeword? To receive four clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Square Routes® No 389 Medium

By Ian Simpson & Richard Heald

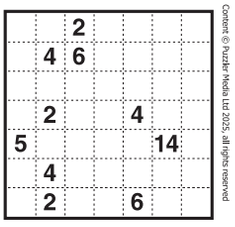


BEAR
BEE
COMB
CREEPER
LOCUST
MONSTER
MOONER
SUCKLE
TRAP

Put one letter in each cell so that each word on the right can be spelt out by moving from cell to cell without using diagonal moves. You can use a cell more than once in a word (including backtracking into a cell you've just used), but double letters (eg, the LL in ALL) must use two adjacent cells. The words start in the coloured cells and the vowels are shown by asterisks.

Cell Blocks

No 5803



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Solution to Square Routes, Codeword and Cell Blocks in MindGames on Monday. Yesterday's solutions on page 45

Sudoku No 17,030 Fiendish

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9

Solutions to Sudoku, Killer & KenKen in MindGames on Monday

							4	3
7					1	9		
			2	4	5		7	
							3	7
	3		5		6		9	
2	6							
	1		9	3	4			
		4	1					6
3	5							

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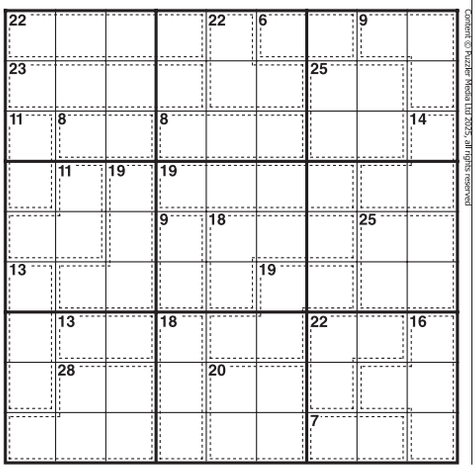
Killer No 10,879 Deadly

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



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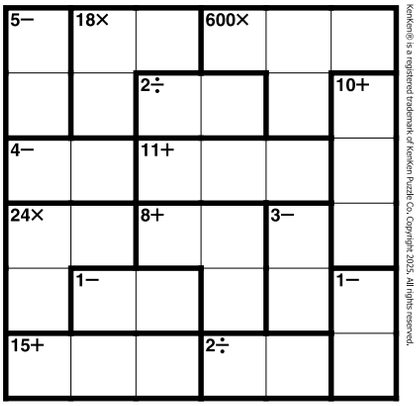
KenKen No 6912 Medium

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.



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Cryptic Quintagram®

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Someone who makes weight correct (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

2 Average family cake (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Servant's trouble unexpectedly dropping round (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Ref's low after rearranging bouquet (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Swallowing part of PM's address? (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

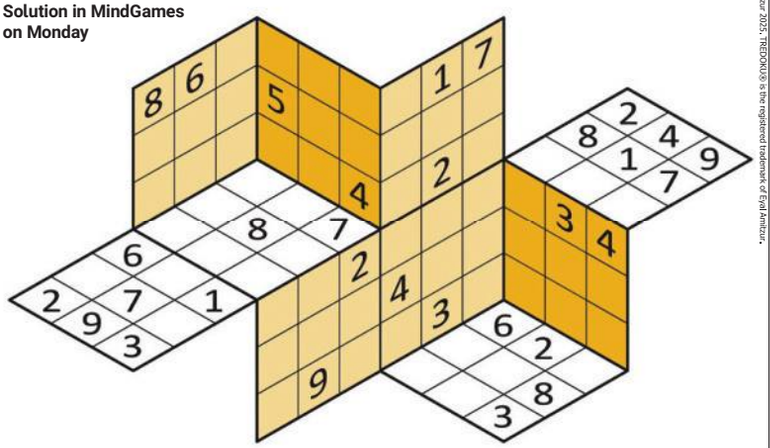
A	B	D	E	E	F	G	G
H	I	I	I	K	L	L	N
N	N	O	O	P	R	R	R
R	S	T	T	U	W	W	W

Solution on page 46

Tredoku No 1955 Medium

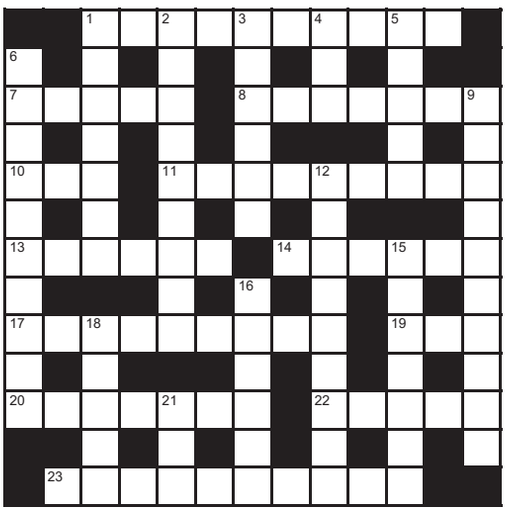
Tredoku is similar to Sudoku: the digits 1 to 9 must appear once only in each 3x3 box and in each line of nine consecutive cells. However, since the puzzle is three-dimensional, the lines may be straight or bent around angles. Follow each line's direction in search of clues.

Solution in MindGames on Monday



Tredoku © Eyal Amitzur 2025. TREDOKU® is the registered trademark of Eyal Amitzur.

times2 Crossword No 10,236



Across

1 Agriculturist who invented the seed-drill (6,4)
7 Capital city of Ghana (5)
8 Outperform (7)
10 Navigational diagram (3)
11 Astronaut's craft (9)
13 Idle conversation (6)
14 Official authorising or banning publications (6)
17 Personifying (9)
19 Fierce dog (3)
20 Break (glass, eg) (7)
22 From Interlaken or Lausanne, eg (5)
23 Supposedly medieval punishment device (4,6)

Down

1 Big cash prize (7)
2 Go above or beyond (9)
3 Cheeky devil (6)
4 Dense substance formerly used in road surfacing (3)
5 Very reluctant (to) (5)
6 Lack of etiquette (3,7)
9 Prolific police informer (10)
12 Charged with vitality and liveliness (9)
15 Vacuum cleaner's force (7)
16 --- Nevada, Californian mountain range (6)
18 Turn-of-the-millennium prime minister (5)
21 Large beer barrel (3)

Solution to Crossword 10,235

S	H	A	R	P			O	F	T
P	R	E		F	I	B	U	L	A	R
O	R	G	A	N	Z	A		O		O	A
T		O	K		C	H	E	E	R	U	P
T	I	T	A	N		E			I		S
E				I	N	F	U	S	E	D	
D	U	O		F		L		Y		A	R	C
	S	E	E	S	A	W	S				A
V		T			N		T	I	G	H	T
E	A	R	T	H	E	N		E		O	C
N		I	A		E	X	M	O	U	T	H
U	N	C	I	V	I	L		I		R	E
S	H		E				C	E	D	A	R

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Mindset By 700

1. Decode, answer and encode to obtain four related words:
a) NAMERICA FGOL RTOU RORGANISE (3)
b) MHORT GESSAGE MERVICE GESSAGE (4)
c) M ARG A A T W T S UB J (1 3 1)
d) STELLITESATELLITE O PANETSLANET (7)
2. Alice beats Bob by 70m over 700m; Bob beats Chris by 70m. Assuming each is running at a constant speed, by how much does Alice beat Chris?
3. Identify the two linked themes:
HOP, OPERA, PERKS, STYLE, VITA, WIFE

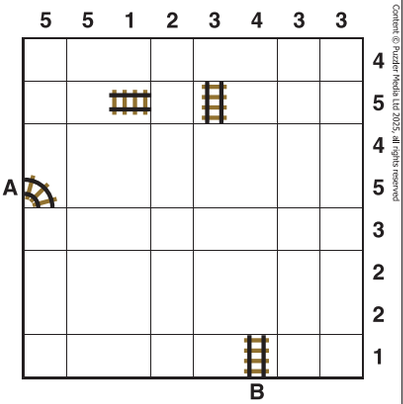
Solutions to Mindset and Scrabble on page 46

Put your solving skills to the test some more with The Times Mindset Puzzles Book 1

Train Tracks No 2945

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Solution in MindGames on Monday



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When and where was today's archive picture taken? Play Picle at thetimes.com/picle

Scrabble® By Paul Gallen

This week's column celebrates the achievement of England's Sam Crispin, who finished as runner-up at the World Youth Scrabble Championship in Nairobi last weekend. The result represents one of the strongest performances by a UK junior player in recent years and came close to ending a long wait for another British world youth champion. The UK's only previous winner was Jack Durand, who captured the title in Colombo in 2014.

The final standings underline just how close the result was. Dineth Fernando of Australia and Crispin finished on 18 wins apiece, but the Australian secured the championship on spread (cumulative margin of victory) by 1,808 points to Crispin's 1,367. The players faced each other in the final game, but Fernando's spread advantage was too significant for Crispin to overcome. Nonetheless, Crispin won the final game by 164 points to end the tournament on a high note.

Early in the game, Crispin found UNSTRIP (N1a) for 84 points. Can you find the 92-point alternative, using the blank as D, on the board extract opposite?

I P R S T U _

Later on, Crispin all but sealed the game with his move of MORTARED (A12d) for 78 points. Using the main board diagram below, can you find the available bonus play if he had held the following rack instead?

A E M O R R U

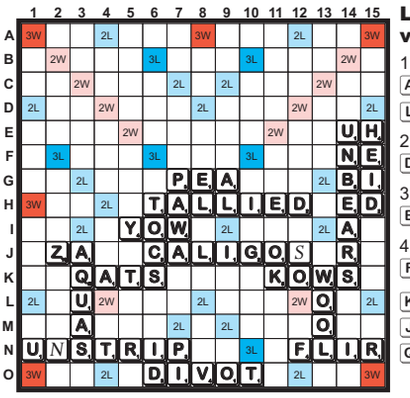
The World Youth Championship is widely regarded as one of the strongest junior competitions in the game. Many former competitors have gone on to become elite adult players, including the former world champion David Eldar, while countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand continue to produce outstanding young talent. Against that level of opposition, Crispin's second-place finish represents an excellent achievement.

Definitions

CALIGOS specks on the cornea
FLIR a forward looking infrared radar

Collins Official Scrabble Words is the word authority used.
Word positions use the grid reference plus (a)cross or (d)own.

2L double letter square (dl) 3L triple letter square (tl) 2W double word square (dw) 3W triple word square (tw)



Letter values

1 point: A E I O U L N R S T
2 points: D G
3 points: B C M P
4 points: F H V W Y
K = 5
J X = 8
Q Z = 10

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Solutions

Killer 10,876

9	7	1	4	6	5	3	2	8
5	6	8	1	2	3	4	7	9
3	2	4	9	7	8	6	5	1
2	8	3	5	4	7	1	9	6
7	9	6	3	8	1	5	4	2
1	4	5	6	9	2	8	3	7
8	3	9	2	5	6	7	1	4
4	1	7	8	3	9	2	6	5
6	5	2	7	1	4	9	8	3

Killer 10,877

2	3	4	5	7	6	8	1	9
8	9	7	1	3	2	5	6	4
1	5	6	9	4	8	2	3	7
9	1	3	6	8	5	4	7	2
6	4	5	7	2	3	9	8	1
7	2	8	4	9	1	3	5	6
3	6	1	2	5	9	7	4	8
4	8	9	3	6	7	1	2	5
5	7	2	8	1	4	6	9	3

KenKen 6911

3	6	5	1	4	2
6	3	4	5	2	1
2	1	3	4	5	6
1	4	6	2	3	5
4	5	2	6	1	3
5	2	1	3	6	4

The Listener 4930

G	W	H	I	P	L	E	T	R	E	E
E	M	U	L	A	A	A	D	E	T	A	T
N	O	M	O	R	N	L	O	C	K	S	T
E	R	O	T	I	C	A	T	H	E	T	I
R	S	S	Y	T	E	M	A	N	H	S	H
I	N	T	O	T	O	F	R	I	A	Y	Y
C	A	E	S	A	R	E	D	C	S	E	P
N	R	A	L	A	Y	V	L	A	N	S	E
A	M	M	O	R	Z	E	N	E	N	D	R
M	A	I	N	L	A	N	D	R	I	E	S
E	G	E	R	E	T	U	C	P	I	L	T
S	H	R	E	D	D	E	D	S	N	A	R

Rearrangement by Ploy
Letters extracted from clues were "NNNNN EEEEE edge ESESESESESESESE bars SSSS WW SSSS", describing paths cutting the grid into four pieces. The SE 5×5 piece contained "keep this" diagonally; the other three were assembled into the 12×12 square for submission, demonstrating Dudeney's dissection of a 13×13 square into squares of 12×12 and 5×5. The circled letters formed "Pythagoras". More details at listenercrossword.com.

The winners are Miriam Morgan and Tom Gill of Northwood, Middlesex; Jeff Aronson of Oxford, Oxfordshire; Meredith Topliss and Denise Wilks of Sheffield, South Yorkshire.

Sudoku 17,025

1	9	3	8	6	2	4	5	7
6	4	2	9	5	7	8	1	3
8	7	5	3	1	4	2	6	9
4	6	1	7	9	8	3	2	5
5	3	9	2	4	1	7	8	6
2	8	7	5	3	6	1	9	4
7	2	6	4	8	9	5	3	1
3	1	4	6	2	5	9	7	8
9	5	8	1	7	3	6	4	2

Sudoku 17,026

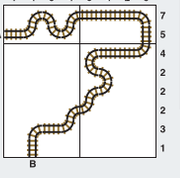
8	6	1	2	4	5	9	3	7
2	3	9	8	1	7	6	4	5
7	4	5	6	9	3	2	1	8
9	5	4	7	3	6	1	8	2
6	7	2	5	8	1	3	9	4
3	1	8	4	2	9	7	5	6
5	9	6	1	7	8	4	2	3
1	2	7	3	5	4	8	6	9
4	8	3	9	6	2	5	7	1

Sudoku 17,027

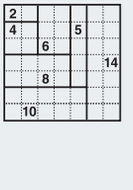
4	1	2	3	6	9	8	7	5
8	3	9	2	5	7	4	6	1
5	6	7	1	4	8	9	2	3
6	5	8	4	2	3	1	9	7
3	2	4	7	9	1	6	5	8
9	7	1	6	8	5	2	3	4
7	4	3	9	1	2	5	8	6
1	9	5	8	7	6	3	4	2
2	8	6	5	3	4	7	1	9

Codeword 5919

Train Tracks 2944



Cell Blocks 5802



MindGames

Chess By David Howell

Royal Ascension

Shreyas Royal has long been regarded as the future of English chess. At this year's British Championship, that future arrived. The 17-year-old scored an outstanding 7.5/9 to become the youngest British champion in history, breaking a record set by Michael Adams in 1989.

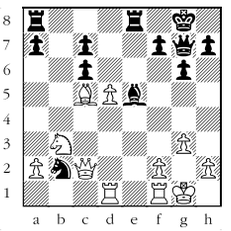
Royal was a thoroughly deserving winner, facing most of his closest rivals and converting his chances when it mattered. He showed deep opening preparation and sharp tactical vision. His practical skills, combined with his trademark confidence, allowed him to escape whenever danger emerged. His triumph makes his omission from England's team for next month's Olympiad look all the more puzzling.

There was something fitting about Adams finishing joint second. The nine-time champion was in the mix for another title and missed a major opportunity against Royal, but perhaps looked a little less ruthless than during his world-class prime. Even so, to remain among the country's best at 54, despite his rating slipping in recent years, is remarkable.

Luke McShane, another enduring figure of British chess, finished alongside Adams. Somehow, after more than two decades among the country's top grandmasters, a first British title still eludes him. His defeat against the new champion proved pivotal.

White: Shreyas Royal
Black: Luke McShane
British Championship, Coventry 2026
Scotch Game

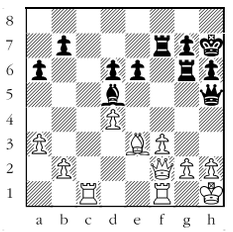
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 A clever choice, specifically against McShane. McShane has often proved vulnerable against those willing to play very concretely from an early stage. For someone so young, Royal has developed a broad opening repertoire. In this game he is rewarded for his direct approach. **3...exd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nxc6 bxc6 6 e5 Qe7 7 Qe2 Nd5 8 g3** A rare sub-variation of the Scotch. McShane, caught by surprise, now began burning significant amounts of time. **8...g6 9 Bg2 Bg7 10 c4 Ba6 11 0-0 0-0 12 Re1 Rfe8 13 Qc2 Qc5 14 Nd2 Bxe5** The first real crossroads. Tellingly, McShane was already 50 minutes behind on the clock. 14...Rxe5 15 Rxe5 Bxe5 16 Bf1 Nb6 seems like a better way for Black to accept the pawn sacrifice. **15 Bf1 Nb6 16 Nb3 Qf8 17 Be3 Na4?** The wrong direction. 17...d5 would have been more principled, when 18 Na5 would keep the game in the balance. **18 Rad1 d5 19 cxd5 Bxf1 20 Rxf1 Nxb2?** The logical follow-up after Black's 17th move. There is a big flaw, however. Retreating with 20...cxd5 21 Rxd5 Nb6 would have minimised the damage, when Black is only slightly worse due to the isolated a- and c-pawns. **21 Bc5 Qg7** 21...Qh6 would have run into a similar trick: 22 Rd4! Bxd4 23 Bxd4 Na4 24 Qxc6 Nb6 25 Qf6.



Black's knight has grabbed a pawn but now finds itself offside. Royal punishes this greed in stylish fashion. **22 Rd4!** A wonderful severance tactic. There is no way home for the black knight, meaning that White will emerge with two dominant minor pieces for a rook. **22...a5** 22...Bxd4 23 Bxd4 forks two pieces. **23 Qxb2 a4 24 Nc1 Ra5 25 Re1!** Royal continues finding all the best moves. The e-file pin means that Black cannot avoid a loss of material. **25...Rxc5 26 Nd3 Rb5 27 Qc2 cxd5 28 Qxa4** Another accurate capture, attacking the b5-rook and targeting the eighth rank. **28...c6 29 Rxe5 Rxe5 30 Qa8+ Qf8 31 Qxf8+ Kxf8 32 Nxe5 Rb1+ 33 Kg2 Rc1 34 a4 f6 35 Nd3 Rd1 36 a5 Ra1 37 Rf4 Ke7 38 Nb4! Black resigns** Royal's energetic play, with threats on every move, finally ends resistance. The extra knight proves decisive.

Winning Move

Black to play. Banerjee-Adams, Coventry 2026. Black has many tempting moves, but only one breaks White's defences. How did Adams land the knockout blow?



The first correct entry drawn on Thursday wins *The Times Winning Moves: 540 Chess Puzzles from Tournament Play* and *The Times Mindset Puzzles Book 1*. Two runners-up will receive a book prize. Answers on a postcard to: The Times Winning Move, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ, or email to: winningmove@thetimes.co.uk. Open to 18+, UK and ROI residents only. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's puzzle: **1 Ne7+!** wins: **1...Qxe7** (1...Nxe7 2 Rxd8 mate) **2 Qxe7 Rxd5 3 Qe8+ Nf8 4 exd5.**
The winner is Dr Patrick Macey of Nuthall, Nottinghamshire. The runners-up are Peter Owst of Swanland, East Yorkshire, and John MacInerney of London SW19.

Bridge By Andrew Robson

David Telfer of Chichester reports this fun and instructive deal from the Sussex Pairs.
Dealer South Neither Vul

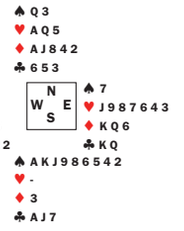


Table One

S	W	N	E
1♠(1)	Pass	2♦	2♥
3♣(2)	Pass	4♥(3)	Pass
5♣(4)	Pass	5♦(4)	Pass
6♥(5)	Pass	6♠(6)	end

(1) No way will this be passed out, given South's shape.
(2) Forcing to game, facing a Two-level response.
(3) Bidding the opponent's suit to show a good 4♠ bid (not promising a heart control).
(4) Control bids.
(5) Exotic void-showing splinter jump.
(6) Too much in hearts and too little — nothing — in clubs for the grand.

Wisely put off hearts by South's void-showing jump to 6♥, West kicked off with the ten of clubs. Declarer beat East's queen with the ace and, naturally keen for the overtrick (it was Pairs after all), crossed to the ace of diamonds, cashed the ace of hearts, dropping a club and ruffed a diamond, noting East's queen.

Declarer had carefully ruffed with the four of spades, retaining his previous deuce. He led the five of spades to dummy's queen, both opponents following, then ruffed a third diamond (with the six). With East's king falling, he could lead that two of spades (which he had carefully placed to one end of his hand to avoid carelessness) to dummy's three and discard his jack of clubs on the jack of diamonds. That was 13 tricks and small slam made plus one.

Making the 13th trick was especially key at Table Two ...

Table Two

S	W	N	E
4NT(1)	Pass	5NT(2)	Pass
7♠(3)	end		

(1) This seldom-used opener asks for specific aces. South is gambling on the spades (although the chances of an opponent holding ♠Qxx(x) is well against the odds — 1:7.37 I think); and also the clubs.
(2) Shows two (unspecified) aces.
(3) Not gilt-edged but, as South has chosen to go this optimistic route, he may as well go all-in.

Declarer would have been able to establish dummy's diamonds ... except that West found the entry-cutting ten of spades lead. Drat.

Declarer drew two rounds of trumps, finishing with dummy's queen. He then cashed the ace of hearts (dropping a club), ruffed a heart and ran all his spades. On the final spade, East was squeezed between ♦KQ and ♣KQ. Either dummy's ♦AJ, or his ♣AJ, had to score a second trick — grand slam made. There had been no defence.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

The Listener Crossword No 4933 Organ Donor by eXternal

Senders of the first three correct entries drawn will receive *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* or may choose from a selection of other books (see below). Send your entry with contact details completed to: Listener Crossword 4933, 5 Ibbetson Rise, Leeds, LS27 7UJ, to arrive by August 27.

Listener 4930 solution on page 45

Prize options and more at listenercrossword.com
More information about Chambers books can be found at chambers.co.uk

Name.....

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Address.....

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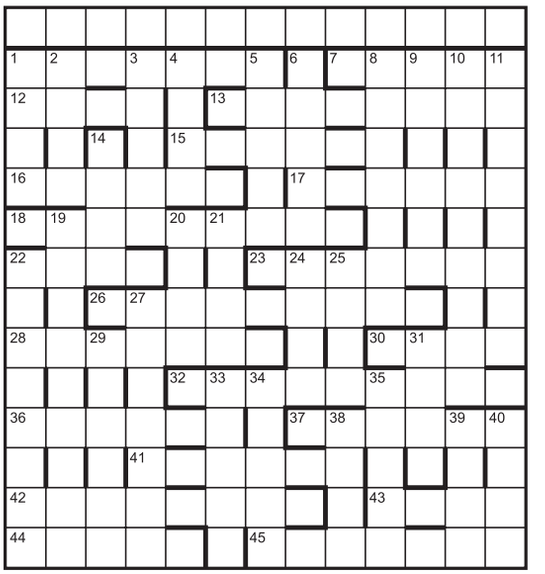


Postcode..... **Email/phone**.....

Each across clue needs a word removed to enable solving; one choice of the words' first or last letters spells a story, the other its author. In each column, enter one answer in line with a motif of a companion story to the first. After filling the grid, move one letter from each of these entries to the top row, showing the emergence of the second story's titular character, and highlight what was left behind (six cells). Ignoring gaps, all final grid entries are real words, names or phrases. *The Chambers Dictionary* (2016) is the primary reference.

Across

1 Flyer handout misconstrued university book title (7, *two words*)
7 Old king's revolutionary approach inspired frenzy across Germany (5)
12 Genuine emotion around this Afrikaner's encampment (4)
13 Long short story of sailor abandoning some unloveable rogue (8)
15 Paint depot has great cream for interior (6)
16 Clerk with path more well-trodden ignoring leader (6)
17 Concerned with garden of rye grass (6)
18 Good crowd care for spiritual instructor (9)
22 Was ominous offensive striking lead military vehicle? (4)
23 Crossbeam last in timber market with extortionate price (7)
26 Playing music, kept command in ingenious raid (9, *three words*)
28 Vagrant fine traversing Arabian Desert (7)
30 Clear skin of nine mice from soiled grate (4)
32 Arcane items auctioneers allow to be shifted, disposing of *any* piece of junk? (9)
36 Confirm attorney is cousin in Paris (6)
37 Seaside town councillor grabs church land (6)
41 Cut article, a version one pens (6)
42 Resist before hugging thin old woman (8)
43 Distinctive Spanish character before painting on wall without frame (4)
44 Spenser's e-bike grief, unsaddled cycling (5)
45 Ten upper-class nobs dog excitedly licked (7)

Down

1 Strike force by explosive (4)
2 Competitor loses versus old monarch, say (4)
3 Sons rent warehouse (5)
4 Periodically tried new trend (4)
5 Disregarding rule, convey punitive task (5)
6 Peculiar style of cheese, one substituted for American (5)
8 Not satisfied base diameter is unmeasured (7)
9 Fix decking's sides and seal gaps in wood (6)
10 Everything I institute in church is symbolic (9)
11 Church dignitary holding mass with the German person requesting (8)
14 Heard tale about Scotsman's money once (4)
19 Do broadcast timid mammal upright (9)
20 Encounter wading birds shaking wings (4)
21 Places I pass over (4)
22 Wine and beer leads to rows triggering state of readiness for crisis (8, *two words*)
24 Unenclosed cattle spread in local area (4)
25 French city bar closes in ten, says female friend (4)
27 With reproductive organ exposed, whip submissive type in Vegas (7, *two words*)
29 Something exciting, less hot and less dry (6)
31 Smitten mermaid leaving confines of sea for prince (4)
33 Creative sorts from Spain aboard vessels (5)
34 Love interest in abstract works (5, *two words*)
35 Wool prepared for spinning in abundance, clipped and rolled (5)
38 Not "of woman born", topping King (4)
39 Lake view of Berliners in prime locations (4)
40 Route travelled through water in sound (4)

Today's Solutions

Sakuro 4821

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Wright
2 Parkin
3 Butler
4 Flowers
5 Downing

Friday's Polygon
impost, isotopy, miso, mist, misty, moist, most, oops, **pomposity**, popsy, posit, post, posy, simp, soot, sooty, soppy, spit, spot, stomp, stompy, stoop, stop, tipsy, topos, tops.

Scrabble
*D*ISRUPT (N1a) ARMOURED (A12d) — 74 points.

Word Watch
Etesian (a) Occurring periodically (*Chambers*)
Deke (a) A feint in ice hockey (*Collins*)
Theopneust (a) Divinely inspired (*OED*)
Frustum (c) A part or portion (*OED*)

Mindset
1. a) GAP: AMERICAN GOLF TOUR ORGANISER = PGA. (Move last letter to start). b) NEXT: SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE MESSAGE = TEXT (Retreat first letter by six); c) H AND M: MARGARET ATWOOD TALE SUBJECT = HANDMAID (Remove last three letters and separate out first and last remaining letters); d) MONSOON: SATELLITES OF PLANETS = MOONS (remove second letter and append copy of word without first and last letters).
2. 133m. [(1 - 0.9^2) × 700m].
3. Life and Works. {STYLE (follows LIFE), VITA (Latin for LIFE), WIFE (rhymes with LIFE)}; {HOP (follows WORKS), OPERA (Latin for WORKS), PERKS (rhymes with WORKS)}.

One question — four hints
How many will you need?
Try Quizle here or at
thetimes.com/quizle

Jumbo crossword No 1804

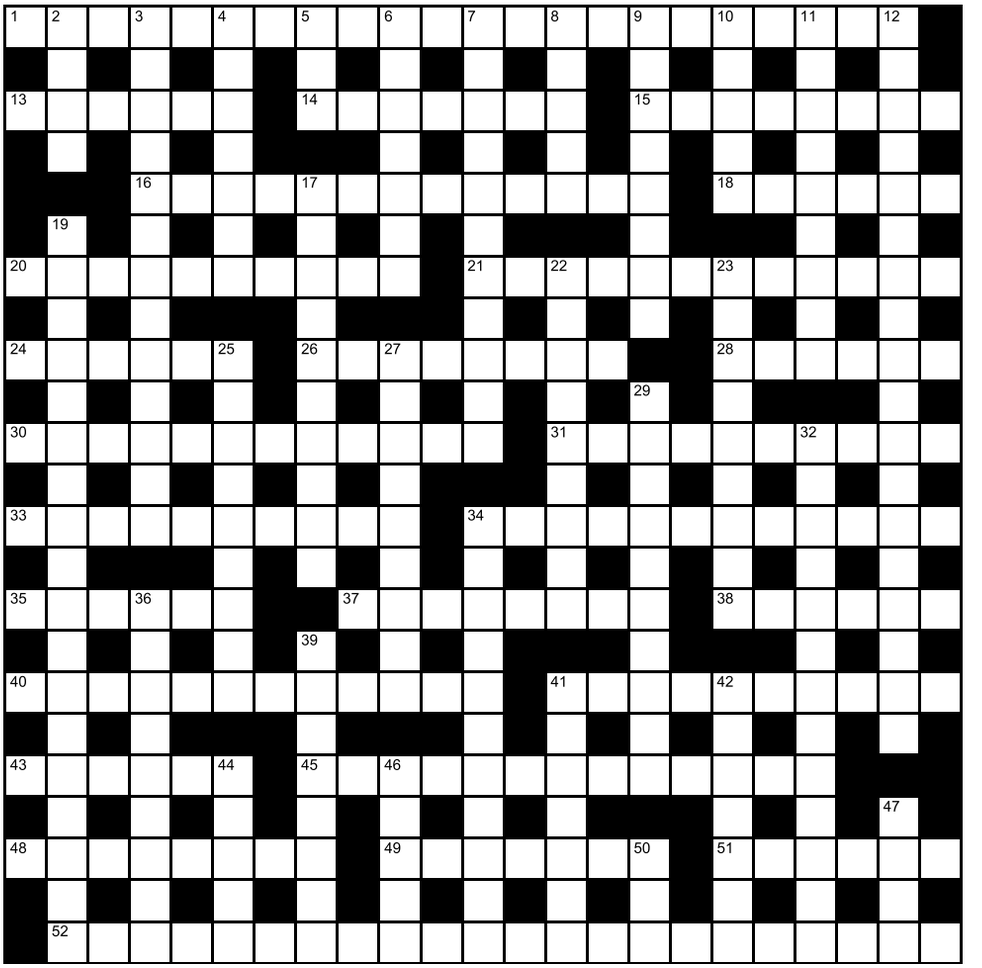
Cryptic clues

Across

1 Historical complaint follows outstanding lavish spending (11,11)
13 Fold the Parisian ribbed fabric (6)
14 Gets volunteers to fill round containers with rubbish (7)
15 Son working on fast food mostly matures rapidly (8)
16 Enquiry involved visiting at one (13)
18 Left a wine concealed (6)
20 Prodigy was to begin with lower than class (10)
21 Extended prison stay for prisoner inside revealed as gay (12)
24 Order record to be returned for ball (6)
26 Recurring ideas embracing love with those used to drag (8)
28 Loosen ties with international organisation — large one (6)
30 Potentially my CEO with no public/private system? (5,7)
31 Crustacean — cram it with herb when cooked (6,4)
33 We answer the gang going through showers? (10)
34 You're on blog excitedly introducing current anatomical science (12)
35 Information covering Royal Military Academy in a foreign language (6)
37 Concerned with splitting pens — with time most broke? (8)
38 Stealth fighters in European agreement accepted by Poles (6)
40 Plant distribution study work suffering setback in brief life time, quietly hard years (12)
41 Like the palm covered in an extremely bad hand? (10)
43 Landowner curtailed end of pheasant shoot (6)
45 Tricky period not long after the clocks change? (5,5,3)
48 Couturier Dior initially always incorporates autograph (8)
49 I put in what Nov 30 might be called to mislead? (7)
51 Vividly report fire destroying earth further forward (6)
52 Cos, say, smothered by fair number putting on coat — with this? (8,6,8)

Down

2 Wine that's unstarted is fine (4)
3 Second delicate and largely unexciting fellow is seeking pleasure (4-9)
4 Freeze off-screen commentary that's not very old (3,4)
5 Some biofuel turned up for new type of craft? (3)
6 Not having appeared in court, made free with input of king (7)
7 Cold capital to write up year's investigation of weather (11)
8 Child of Japanese immigrants lives in northeast India (5)
9 Townie in age-old city with ancient ruin outside it (8)
10 Fairy lough in great danger (5)
11 Agreeing precisely one of teeth includes one cavity's beginning (9)
12 Impossible to cross over big road junction in crazy Lebanon (3-15)
17 US city society isn't supported by former French money (5,5)
19 Young criminal upset Quentin, Neville and Jude (8,10)
22 Perhaps service firm which is built on branches? (4,5)
23 Utter disaster not starting to take in university learning (9)
25 Other tune composed to that (9)
27 Agitated wife ahead of crude set coming around (7-2)
29 Therefore see soaks returning for alcohol (10)
32 Advance acceleration in vehicle certainly covering a run in 2026 and 2027? (8,5)
34 Formed calcic nylon unlike any ring compound (11)
36 Note company around Fagin shaking grandee (9)
39 Omani's ready to flee after tense rehearsal (5,3)
41 I put on a dicky that's perfect (7)
42 Clear bubble half-lost underneath car (7)
44 City in Utah raised sons (5)
46 Root cut primarily into bones (5)
47 Blessing novice's taken up (4)
50 Clue definition? I'd "last of all" (3)



NAME:

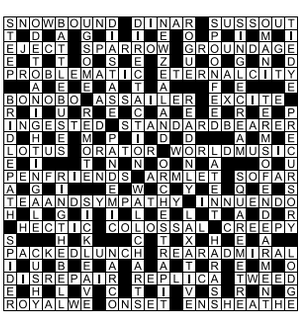
ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

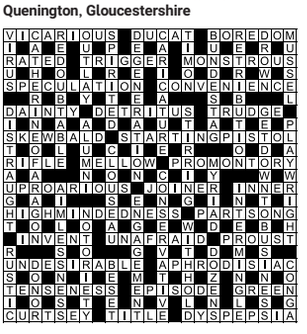
Prizes

The prize for each of the first correct solutions to the Cryptic and times2 Jumbo clues to be opened will be a collection of Times reference books — including The Times Reference Atlas of the World, Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus, and Bradford's Crossword Solver's Dictionary published by HarperCollins. Entries should be marked "Cryptic" or "times2" and sent to: The Times Jumbo Crossword 1804, PO Box 2164, Colchester, Essex CO2 8LJ; or emailed to: jumbo@thetimes.co.uk, with "Cryptic 1804" or "times2 1804" in the subject line, to arrive by August 27. Open to 18+, UK & ROI residents only. The winners and the solutions will be published on August 29.

Solution to Cryptic Jumbo 1802
The winner is Patrick Maxwell of Cambridge



Solution to times2 Jumbo 1802
The winner is Mark Chamberlain of Quenington, Gloucestershire



The Times Crossword, Latin Crossword, Saturday Quiz and Sakuro are in the back of the main paper

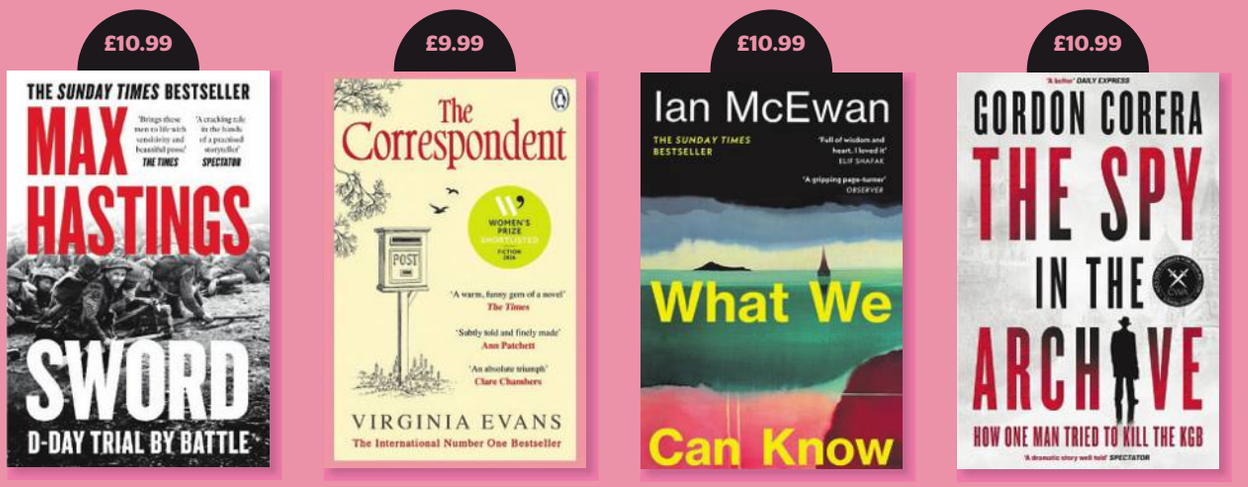
times2 clues

Across

1 Novel by Thomas Hardy (3,5,2,12)
13 Disconnect (6)
14 Destructive whirlwind (7)
15 Strong adverse reaction (8)
16 Balancing load (13)
18 Rocky; tough, determined (6)
20 French writer of fables (2,8)
21 Person favouring their country going it alone (12)
24 Louisa May —, novelist (*Little Women*) (6)
26 Descended on ropes (8)
28 Academic dissertation (6)
30 Make a futile gesture (3,2,3,4)
31 Racehorse from the same establishment (10)
33 Do up (10)
34 The world's oceans (3,5,4)
35 Following rules exactly (6)
37 Drug inducing sleep (8)
38 Very fashionable (6)
40 November 11, 1918 (9,3)
41 Spur railway (6,4)
43 Sudden flash (of lightning) (6)
45 Second or repeated inspection (2-11)
48 Arid plateau in southern Africa (8)
49 Difficult and tiring (7)
51 Level within a building (6)
52 (Having) no small talk (7,2,3,3,7)

Down

2 Search diligently for (4)
3 Confectionery item (4,9)
4 Dairy product (7)
5 Long deep track (3)
6 Conifer (3,4)
7 Member of a specialised school or college (11)
8 Leather fastener (5)
9 Refutation, contradiction (8)
10 Happen again (5)
11 Careful and persistent work (9)
12 Simple in theory but harder in practice (6,4,4,4)
17 Three-sided (10)
19 Rail service mandated by law (13,5)
22 Excessively sugary (9)
23 Mental powers (9)
25 Retaliation in kind (3,3,3)
27 Record of a game (9)
29 Cristobal —, Spanish couturier (10)
32 Of various types (13)
34 Abnormally rapid heart rate (11)
36 Travelling from place to place (9)
39 Contemptuously rejecting (8)
41 Remove by applying heat (4,3)
42 Deep red (7)
44 Army fabric (5)
46 Muse of love poetry (5)
47 Healthy; spring (4)
50 Knight's title (3)



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THE TIMES
SATURDAY AUGUST 15 2026

Sport

MAJA HITIJ/GETTY IMAGE

Keely settles for silver

Keely Hodgkinson edged out in thrilling 800m final as her rival Audrey Werro takes gold at European Championships. **Report, pages 2-3**

Bhatia to be Liverpool vice-chair

Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Fenway Sports Group has agreed a deal to sell a third of Liverpool to a consortium headed by the British-Indian businessman Amit Bhatia, which values the club at about £5.5 billion.

Bhatia is to become Liverpool's new vice-chairman and take a place on the board in return for a minority stake in the 20-times English champions.

He is to be joined on an expanded board by Elaine Saverin, the wife of the Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin, and Bryan Baum, who is representing the Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, rather than Bezos becoming a board member himself.

The transaction for about 30 per cent of Liverpool is worth in the region of £1.65 billion. There is no commitment beyond that from FSG to sell a greater shareholding to Bhatia's 1892 Holdings company, named after the year in which Liverpool was founded, in the future.

However, the transaction documents provide options and flexibility for how a relationship may evolve over time, which in effect means that Bhatia would be in the driving seat to purchase a larger shareholding should FSG wish to sell more of the club in the future.

For now, FSG will retain majority ownership and there is to be no change in the day-to-day operation of Liverpool. The transaction is not a direct capital raise for the club, or an indication of a change in transfer strategy.

The deal remains subject to approval from the new Independent Football Regulator and those involved must pass the Premier League owners' and directors' test. That could take up to 90 days. Liverpool announced record revenues of £703 million in the last accounting period, spending about £550 million on new signings for the team over the past 14 months. The club had not been seeking investment out of financial necessity.

Rather FSG believes the opportunity stood out due to the calibre of people involved and the experience, relationships and global links they can bring to help grow the club.

There is an expectation that the consortium will open up networks in India and across Asia and support Liverpool's long-term growth ambitions by bringing together experts from across global business, technology and investment.

Increasing the club's turnover would then enable more to be spent on the team given the Premier League's squad cost ratio regulations. These limit the spending of top-flight clubs to 85 per cent of their football-related revenue

Continued on page 5

Fears grow for missing British athletics coach

Matt Lawton
Chief Sports Correspondent

A highly regarded British athletics coach has been missing from his role for two months after failing to return to work with his athletes after a weekend away.

Friends and colleagues have grown increasingly concerned for Leon Baptiste, a former sprinter and coach to the 400m runner Charlie Dobson.

They believe that the 41-year-old former Commonwealth sprint medal-winner went to Morocco with some close friends. They think it was for either a stag weekend or a golf trip.

But messages to his phone have not been returned, with UK Athletics (UKA) staff forced to step in to take over the training programme of Dobson and the rest of Baptiste's group. "We've been told not to contact his family because it's a private matter," one source said.

UKA, which pays Baptiste as a Loughborough-based consultant, has declined to comment, citing confidentiality reasons. It is understood performance staff, led by the one-lap relay coach and former European champion Martyn Rooney, have been supporting Dobson and his training partners in Baptiste's absence.

Baptiste is much admired for the way he made the transition to coaching, having been forced to retire as an athlete aged 28. He won 200m gold at the 2010 Commonwealth Games but a serious knee problem prevented him from taking part in the London Olympics, and ultimately led to his retirement.

"The decision for an athlete to retire is

Continued on page 2

Hodgkinson second best in

Matt Lawton
Chief Sports Correspondent

The podium

1 A Werro (Swi) 1:54.81
2 K Hodgkinson (GB) 1.55.01
3 F Broeders-Bol (Neth) 1.55.54

Nobody wins every contest, every battle, every race, and Keely Hodgkinson would do well to remember that when she reflects on this utterly mesmerising two-lap encounter here in Birmingham.

But this will be painful for the Olympic 800m champion, when she came into this season off the back of a world title, and a world indoor record, confident that, rather like 2024, this would be her year.

Even when she did then suffer that shock defeat by Audrey Werro in June, Hodgkinson bristled with defiance. "I won't let that happen again," she said, very much in the belief that she still had the measure of the 22-year-old Swiss.

Well, it has now happened again, and this time not in a Diamond League meeting in Stockholm but in a European final in front of a crowd that so adores her.

It was a two-lap race that certainly lived up to its billing as the moment of these championships, with the presence of the brilliant Femke Broeders-Bol providing an extra dimension to an already fascinating duel. With 300m to go they entered what Lord Coe calls the killing zone strung out in a line, with Werro out front and Hodgkinson followed closely by a hugely talented Dutchwoman still transitioning from the 400m hurdles.

Werro had already been brave, dusting herself down after suffering that nasty fall in the semi-finals and seizing control of the race with the best part of 500m remaining. She had run on to Hodgkinson's shoulder after the breaking from the stagger, and decided after coming off the second bend to move clear into the front.

The pace was already fast. A shade over 27 seconds at 200m; 56.35 at the bell; quick for a major championship final. By the time an 800m enters the back straight for a second time, that point where Coe says the very best will accelerate with the intention of running any finish out of their rivals, Hogdkinson usually likes to go.

In Werro, though, she had someone moving at a speed that made such a tactic impossible, forcing her to settle on a different plan that entailed delaying her attack until the closing straight.

But when that precise moment arrived and Hodgkinson endeavoured to pounce, she found Werro still had enough in the tank to hold off both her challenge and that of a fast-finishing Broeders-Bol.

Werro crossed for gold in a championship record of 1:54.81 and a first European title, with Hodgkinson, twice the previous winner at these championships, forced to settle for silver in 1:55.01. Broeders-Bol came next, with a national record of 1:55.54.

It was, Hodgkinson may well concede, the toughest test of her career so far. There have been other rivals, of course. The American Athing Mu was a fraction too fast when she first emerged as a precociously gifted teenager at the Tokyo Olympics; Kenya's Mary Moraa then caught her out not just in the World Championships in Budapest in 2023 but at this very stadium 12 months earlier in the Commonwealth Games.

In Werro and Broeders-Bol, however, Hodgkinson now knows she has some serious competition for what lies ahead; the Los Angeles Games in 2028 and perhaps beyond. It is brilliant for the sport. A trio of athletes who will push one another in a way we once witnessed when Seb Coe and Steve Ovett were joined in the pursuit of gold and world-record glory by Steve Cram.

But it leaves Hodgkinson and her husband and wife coaching team, Trevor Painter and Jenny Meadows, staring at a sporting conundrum that is going to be quite some challenge to solve.

Hodgkinson is some middle-distance runner, but in her event she now has these two towering opponents who possess superior flat speed. There are more opportunities for revenge, of course. Zurich at the end of this month. The Ultimate Championships in Budapest next month. But Hodgkinson will need to be at her very best, not just to beat this towering Swiss over two laps but also to the oldest world record of all; a mark that has stood since 1983.

There was yet more success in the sprints for the British team, but not the quadruple of victories that Zharnel Hughes would have hoped to complete. He was unable to emulate Amy Hunt and Romell Glave in capturing another gold, instead taking silver in the 200m behind a German sprinter facing calls for a doping ban. Owen Ansah won convincingly, clocking 19.95sec ahead of Hughes in 20.16, but he still faces a lengthy suspension after missing a drugs test. He insists he did nothing wrong. His national anti-doping agency has a different view. As a race it was all the more unusual for the fact that the bronze position was shared by two athletes with exactly the same finishing time, down to a thousandth of a second. On this occasion Timothé Mumenthaler, of Switzerland, and Italy's Eseosa Fostine Desalu were inseparable.

It was a miserable first day in the heptathlon for the double world champion, Katarina Johnson-Thompson. She missed the Commonwealths because of a calf issue and the 33-year-old was well below her usual high standards, lying 16th at the end of the opening day. Her performance in the sprint hurdles was the worst of her senior championship career and things did not exactly improve, in either the high jump, the shot put or the 200m.

But it remained another terrific night of athletics, with Karsten Warholm setting a European Championship record in the 400m hurdles. After winning in 46.63, the Norwegian had a little fun at the expense of the organisers blamed for low attendances. "I heard the rumours about ticket prices, so I thought I'd better put on a show," he said.

'Empty seats won't harm 2029 bid'

Continued from front

never easy, but the decision has been made for me," he said at the time.

Since then he has helped Dobson become one of Britain's leading 400m runners, but the 26-year-old looked short of form as he failed to make the final at this week's European Championships in Birmingham.

Dobson alluded to the situation with Baptiste when he said it had been "an interesting eight weeks", although he also said he had been struggling with some injury "niggles" that had contributed to his withdrawal from last month's Commonwealth Games.

Indeed, he had not raced since June 28 before appearing in Birmingham this week, with his highlight of the season a third place in the national championships with a time of 44.69sec. That was also some way off his personal best of 44.14 from last year, which put him second on the British all-time list.

He did not participate in the heats of the men's 4x400m yesterday morning and it remains to be seen if he returns to the track for tomorrow's final.

Meanwhile Lord Coe has dismissed concerns that the poor attendances in the first few sessions of the European Championships could undermine London's chances of securing the 2029 World Championships.

A decision will be made at the World Athletics Congress in Budapest next month, with London up against Rome, Munich and Nairobi.

The World Athletics president, while stressing that he does not have a vote on the matter, pointed to the success of previous events in London.

"It's horses for courses," Coe, who oversaw the delivery of the 2012 Olympics, said. "We had the London 2012 Olympics. We had the World Championships in 2017. London could point to having sold out the Diamond League five months before the event took place in July."

Some have blamed the price of the most expensive tickets — up to £150 — for the low crowds but by Thursday night the Alexander Stadium was

toughest test yet

TOLGA AKMEN/SHUTTERSTOCK/EPA; DYLAN MARTINEZ/REUTERS

Switzerland's Werro, above, claims her first major international gold after holding off Hodgkinson down the straight, main, to deny the anguished Briton, below, a third straight European 800m crown

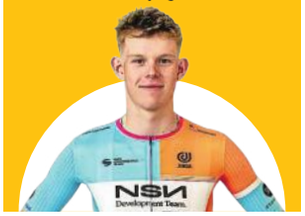
close to the 23,000 capacity and organisers expect full houses for the next two nights.

"It's always a challenge starting on a Monday morning [like Birmingham did]," Coe said. "I think back to 2017. We started on a Friday night and we had the advantage of Mo Farah being the centrepiece. I always sensed this was going to build."

BRITISH CYCLIST, 19, DIES IN CRASH

Sport pays tribute to Finlay Tarling after collision with car during race in Portugal

News, page 13



'It's so bad, I'm confused': Ramsay-Peaty out in heats

Swimming
Craig Lord

Adam Ramsay-Peaty was in a state of shock, dazed and unable to fathom the depth to which his form has sunk. He had just finished eighth out of ten in his heat at the European Championships.

The world record-holder and the greatest breaststroke sprinter in history is not even a reserve for the semi-finals of the 50m event that drew him back from the brink of retirement when it was added to the Olympic programme last year. With his global high bar of 25.95sec set back in 2017, Ramsay-Peaty stared up at the results in disbelief yesterday morning in Paris, having finished in 20th place overall with a time of 27.34.

At the top of the pile going into the semi-finals is Simone Cerasuolo, who finished in 26.20 — 0.25 shy of Ramsay-Peaty's world record.

The 31-year-old has 16 European titles, including a record four in the 50m event, but looked like a novice as he left the blocks. His trajectory and the angle of his entry into the pool resulted in a poor start that left him more than a metre behind the leaders. After he surfaced and broke into his stroke, the triple Olympic and eight-times world champion could see that the damage had been done. He then gave us a fleeting 30 metres of the great champion he has been.

"These performances are not good enough at all," Ramsay-Peaty said after the slowest 50m championship race of his international career, dating back to 2014. "Even now, I'm like, it's so bad that I'm confused. I don't really know where to start on a debrief. It's just a heat, you know. It's so bad, very frustrating."

Despite his disappointment Ramsay-Peaty cheered on his British team-mates from the stands as they celebrated more breaststroke honours last night, with Angharad Evans adding a silver in the 200m to her 100m gold. There was also a bronze for James Guy in the 200m freestyle.

SPORT NOTEBOOK

Martyn Ziegler
Chief Sports Reporter

Revealed: details of Fifa probe into Infantino private jet use

Gianni Infantino's claims around a private jet paid for by a Russian oligarch to visit the Pope shortly after becoming Fifa president in 2016 are detailed in a previously unseen report obtained by The Times.

Infantino was cleared by Fifa's ethics committee in July 2016 of breaching conflict of interest rules around his private jet use, which was said to have been considerably more than that of his predecessor, Sepp Blatter.

The full report of the investigation has been kept under wraps by Fifa for ten years. It details private jet flights to Moscow to meet Vladimir Putin and then to Qatar, paid for by Russia and Qatar, joining a Uefa private flight to Slovenia and flying with his wife and mother from Milan to Rome to meet Pope Francis.

The report, a copy of which has been seen by The Times, says: "According to Mr Infantino, he considered the meeting with the Pope as being of a purely private nature. He therefore claimed to have arranged for the flights on his own."

However, his assistant at the time told investigators that Mattias Grafström, now Fifa's secretary general, "was the person who had organised that trip".

Infantino told the investigation the private jet belonged to Leon Semenenko, a Russian billionaire and one-time business partner of Alisher Usmanov, who at one point had a significant stake in Arsenal.

Semenenko said he had purchased the plane from Irina Viner, Usmanov's wife.

The investigation found "these indirect ties are not considered to be close enough in order to be considered as problematic in the light of conflicts of interest".

Infantino was also cleared of an ethics breach by his initial refusal to sign a contract after becoming Fifa president — he told a Fifa Council meeting that the proposed $2million (£1.48million) salary, was "insulting". Fifa's latest annual report shows Infantino earned $6 million last year.

Full stream ahead

Wayne Rooney will continue his BBC commitments — TV and podcast — despite agreeing to present a new show for Gary Neville's *The Overlap*, called *Stick to United with Wayne Rooney*.

Rooney's show will be streamed on Disney, as will the *Stick to Football* show, as Neville looks to expand his media empire.

Johnson puzzle

One person who may not be back on BBC screens is former Olympic 400m champion Michael Johnson, despite him saying in an interview that he was in talks with the broadcaster.

The comment is understood to have baffled BBC bosses. Johnson also claimed athletes who took part in his collapsed Grand Slam Track project "got paid" but a number deny this.

Brand on the run?

Fifa's sponsors are maintaining a close watch on developments at the organisation following the global outcry against Infantino's scheme.

One of the sponsors is Unilever, and its global brand vice-president Ben Curtis told the Unofficial Partner podcast he had not spoken to Fifa since the crisis broke. "All I know are just what I've read in the press," he said. "It's a watching brief."

Desert storm

The New Zealand FA has withdrawn its endorsement of Infantino's re-election but Qatar has positioned itself firmly behind the beleaguered Fifa president.

An email from the Qatari FA president Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, copied to all 47 Asian Football Confederation member associations, takes the AFC president Sheikh Salman to task for writing a joint letter with Uefa and Concacaf criticising Infantino over the World Cup sell-off debacle.

It states: "Besides a disagreement to certain elements, our main concern is confined to the process by which the statement came to be issued in the name of, and as purportedly representing, AFC's membership."

Qatar appeared to be perfectly happy for Infantino to draw up plans to sell off stakes in the World Cup to private investors without first consulting any member associations.

Modest Cram

Steve Cram is being referred to as "Yours Truly" in athletics circles after using the phrase during his commentary of Josh Kerr's world mile record three weeks ago.

Cram was running down the list of British athletes who had previously held the record: "Steve Ovett, Sebastian Coe, yours truly...". Kerr's run broke the record set by Hicham El Guerrouj 27 years ago.

Painful and messy transfer window is hindering Arteta

Arsenal v Manchester City
Community Shield
Millenium Stadium
Kick-off: Tomorrow, 3pm
TV: TNT Sports 1

Gary Jacob

After securing Arsenal's first title in 22 years last season, Mikel Arteta spoke about evolving away from the pragmatic style that had made them champions of England. He wanted his team to become more ambitious and more fluid.

For all their discipline and defensive strength, and the corner routines that yielded a Premier League-record 18 goals, the question became whether, with the burden of the title lifted, Arsenal would play with more freedom and risk. It would certainly be welcomed by many fans, who only accepted a pragmatic style to get over the line.

Arsenal actually played more dynamic football in Europe last season, helped by having greater space than in the Premier League — and no jeopardy in reaching the knockout stage. But after defeat by Paris Saint-Germain on penalties in the Champions League final in May, Arteta set the target of emulating their rivals' technical ability, movement and creativity.

Arteta, who is now in his eighth season as Arsenal manager, has returned to the theme in recent weeks. "Now we have to show that we belong to this level and we want to increase and take the club to a different dimension," he said last month.

The 44-year-old felt PSG had game-changing players in their squad and, buoyed by Arsenal's success on the pitch and an estimated record revenue — approaching £800 million last season, thought to be the third-highest in the world, behind Real Madrid and Barcelona — Arteta's plan was to bring in similar stars to improve the quality of their attack.

But so far the transfer window has been painful and messy. Having entered the summer believing Arsenal had the chance to dominate English football because their closest rivals would be in transition — including Manchester City, who will be led by Enzo Maresca when they meet in the Community Shield in Cardiff tomorrow — Arteta admitted that few players were available to improve his squad. He risks missing an opportunity.

Only Bruno Guimarães and Christos Tzolis have joined to strengthen the midfield and wide areas, alongside Piero Hincapié, whose loan from Bayer Leverkusen has become permanent.

Arteta has said that Guimarães's role will change depending on the opponent. He could use the 28-year-old alongside Declan Rice, with freedom to get forward because the full backs move inside. Martin Odegaard or Eberechi Eze could then operate behind a central forward. In theory, the system would help them to break down opponents.

Or Guimarães could play as a right-sided No 8, his role in the past two seasons at Newcastle United, providing a more physical midfield, but one fewer attacker.

Arteta, though, has been unable to secure the top left winger he has needed for two years, or a forward who would be an upgrade on Viktor Gyokeres. Arsenal felt Morgan Rogers was too expensive before he joined Chelsea from Aston Villa for £117 million. They also made a big offer to Vinícius Jr, forcing Real to improve their package.

In the short-term, then, their style may not be radically different from last season. Arteta is without Jurrien Timber and William Saliba, who are key to the right side of his defence.

Other stars are slowly returning to fitness after playing at the World Cup. But Guimarães has only 45 minutes under his belt. Rice and Bukayo Saka only returned this week and may be eased back because they were carrying injuries at the end of last season.

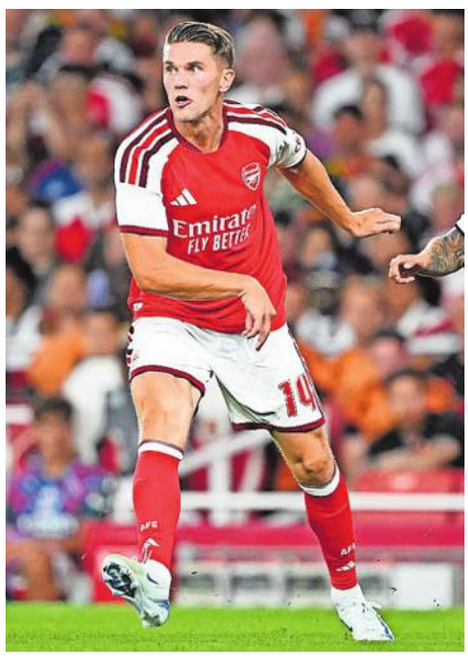
Max Dowman created a buzz last season and the expectation on him to be the creative spark has risen after pre-season. The 16-year-old's willingness to try things, even if they fail to come off, was noticeable in the 1-1 draw with Como on Wednesday. There have been other positives from the friendlies. Odegaard has looked sharp and played incisive passes, continuing his form with Norway at the World Cup. Marli Salmon, a 16-year-old defender who came through the academy, has been comfortable on the ball.

Last season Arsenal recorded 32 clean sheets across all competitions, including 19 in the league. But their record is worse without Saliba — who is expected to be out for several months, at the least — averaging 2.3 points per game since 2022 when he plays, compared with 1.8 when he does not.

Arsenal want to sign experienced cover and are expected to make a formal move for Ezri Konsa before he returns to Villa on Monday. They are also interested in Leverkusen's Jarell Quansah.

Behind the scenes, however, Arsenal are under pressure to trim a bloated squad: partly due to contracts running down and because they want to balance the books in an attempt to become more self-sustaining.

The arrival of Guimarães took their net spend to more than £800 million since Arteta took charge, while the club have been poor sellers, unlike their rivals, particularly City and Chelsea.



Expectation on Dowman, main image, has risen, with Guimarães, top, among only a few summer signings for a club seeking an upgrade on Gyokeres, above. Below, Saliba could be out for some time with his back injury

Selling the 19-year-olds Myles Lewis-Skelly and Ethan Nwaneri is a possibility, even if it would be unpopular among those supporters who feel closely associated with them as academy products.

Lewis-Skelly celebrated his goal against Como on Wednesday by tapping the club badge numerous times and making a heart sign. Manchester United and Chelsea would be interested in him for the right price.

Arteta said one big lesson from recent seasons has been the need to have his best players fit at the end of a campaign. He should be able to rotate a deeper squad and he has revamped the medical and sports science department. Arnaldo Abrantes arrived as head of medical services from Villa to replace Dr Zafar Iqbal. Arteta liked that Abrantes's background as a sprinter for Portugal, qualifying for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, could offer something different. Spanish sports scientist Yeray Abreu Martínez has also joined to work on strength and conditioning.

If they can keep Saka, Kai Havertz and Rice fit, the addition of Guimarães, and a maturing Dowman, should make the side more creative — set against being more vulnerable defensively without Saliba. "My intention is to pin the opponent to the line and not let them rest, that's what I would like to do for 96 minutes," he said.

Arteta has entered the final year of his contract and has a new three-year deal on his desk. "They [the fans] don't have to worry, because I want to be here," he said. "I am extremely happy. When we have the possibility, we will resolve that."

Arsenal have failed to strengthen their squad sufficiently after previous title triumphs. There is work to do if they want to avoid that failure again and retain the title for the first time since 1935.

Arsenal's stilted attack

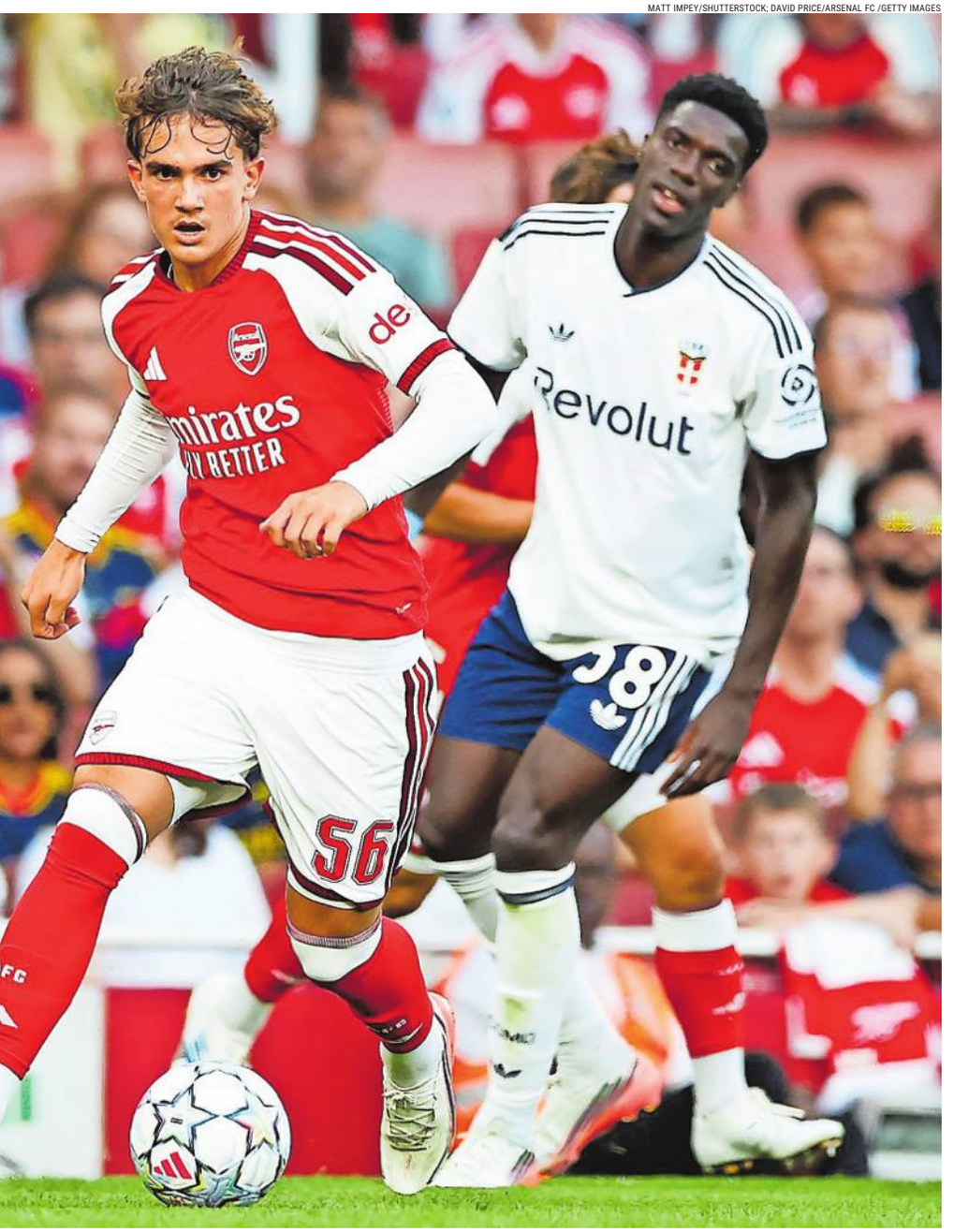
Chances created from open play in 2025-26 Premier League

Percentage of goals scored from open play in the Premier League last season

Team Name	Goals from open play	Percentage of goals from open play
Manchester City	63	82%
Burnley	28	74%
Brighton and Hove Albion	38	73%
Liverpool	44	70%
Nottingham Forest	33	69%
Brentford	37	67%
Sunderland	28	67%
Aston Villa	37	66%
Bournemouth	38	66%
Everton	30	64%
Fulham	30	64%
Chelsea	37	64%
Manchester United	43	62%
West Ham United	28	61%
Tottenham Hotspur	29	60%
Newcastle United	32	60%
Wolverhampton Wanderers	16	59%
Arsenal	42	59%
Crystal Palace	22	54%
Leeds United	26	53%

Source: Opta

MATT IMPEY/SHUTTERSTOCK; DAVID PRICE/ARSENAL FC /GETTY IMAGES



Fernández expected to stay with no bids before 5pm deadline

Peter Rutzler, Charlotte Duncker

Chelsea did not receive any formal bids for Enzo Fernández before their 5pm deadline yesterday and now expect the Argentina midfielder to stay with the club for the 2026-27 season.

Manchester City, who are managed by the former Chelsea head coach Enzo Maresca, are known to be interested in the 25-year-old but, as Maresca had hinted yesterday during a press conference, they did not made a formal offer before Chelsea's deadline.

Chelsea told prospective suitors of Fernández that they had to make a formal written offer worth £120 million for the player before 5pm.

The west London club had privately communicated their desired payment terms and conditions to the representatives of Fernández in May, however those terms are now regarded as off the table, with Fernández expected to be part of Xabi Alonso's squad for the rest of the season.

It remains to be seen whether Chelsea's stance will be tested before the closure of the official transfer window, on September 1.

Chelsea's imposition of a deadline stemmed from a desire to put an end to the uncertainty that has surrounded the future of the Argentina international all summer and try to prevent the situation bleeding into the new season.

Fernández had cast doubt over his Chelsea future during the latter stages of last season, after the resignation of Maresca and then an 8-2 aggregate defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League under the head coach's successor, Liam Rosenior.

Any hope of a move to Real Madrid, a club Fernández was known to admire, was quashed when the Spanish club publicly distanced themselves from any transfer in June but City, under Maresca, who had a strong relationship with Fernández, have remained interested. They are set to sell Tijjani Reijnders while Rodri, their World Cup-winning midfielder, has been subject to bids from Barcelona.

As it stands, City have not accepted a bid for Rodri and it is thought any move for Fernández could be tied to Rodri's future. Fernández reported back for training at Cobham, Chelsea's training ground, on Tuesday and he trained with his team-mates yesterday.

Meanwhile Napoli have agreed to sign the Chelsea defender Benoît Badiashile on loan for the season.

The Italian side will pay a loan fee of £2.6 million, while retaining the option to buy the French defender for £23 million. They will also cover his salary for the duration of the loan.

Badiashile joined Chelsea from Monaco in January 2023 for a reported £35 million. The 25-year-old has struggled for regular game time over the past two seasons and only made eight league appearances last term. He did not travel with the squad for their pre-season tour to Australia and Asia.

Chelsea are trying to reduce the size of their squad before the closure of the transfer window. After the signing of Maxence Lacroix from Crystal Palace, they had ten senior centre backs on the books and Xabi Alonso, the club's new manager, said he wanted that number cut to four or five.

Axel Disasi, who spent the second half of last season on loan at West Ham United, is another defender available for sale while Mamadou Sarr and Aarón Anselmino, who recently picked up a hamstring injury, could also go out on loan.

Chelsea have valued Fernández at £120m

Arsenal keen on Leverkusen's Quansah

Gary Jacob

Arsenal have expressed an interest in the Bayer Leverkusen centre back Jarell Quansah, who is among the options to replace William Saliba while he is absent with a back injury.

The Premier League champions have been unwilling to meet Aston Villa's £60 million valuation of Ezri Konsa. Like Konsa, Quansah can also play at right back, which appeals to Arsenal's preference for versatile players. At 23, Quansah is also five years younger.

Quansah is open to a move to north London and could be a cheaper option than Konsa, whom Arsenal value at about £45 million.

However, Bayer Leverkusen have not yet been approached and do not want to sell. The Bundesliga club signed Quansah from Liverpool for an initial £30 million last summer and he made 44 appearances during his first season in Germany, scoring five goals.

Quansah has been capped six times by England, including three games at right back during this summer's World Cup. He was sent off in the round-of-16 match against Mexico, forcing him to miss the quarter-final win over Norway and the semi-final defeat by Argentina.

At 23 Quansah is five years younger than Arsenal's previous target Konsa

Arsenal want more experienced cover than Cristhian Mosquera, who could also play alongside Gabriel in the centre. Arsenal need a versatile defender because the right backs Jurriën Timber and Ben White have had injury problems. Timber has been recovering from groin surgery while White has struggled with knee problems in the past two seasons.

Meanwhile Aston Villa's move for João Palhinha, the Bayern Munich midfielder, has reached a stalemate with the two clubs unable to agree on the details of the transfer. Unai Emery had been keen to add the former Tottenham Hotspur midfielder to his squad but so far an agreement has not been reached.

It is understood there would be no problem on the player's side but the two clubs are not in agreement on the structure of a potential deal with Villa looking for a loan with an option to buy whereas the Bundesliga side would like a straight sale.

In a press conference to unveil new signing Ismael Saibari, Bayern's sporting director Max Eberl gave an update on Palhinha, casting doubt on whether the move would go ahead. "We had read that Aston Villa had contacted us regarding João, and that is correct," he said. "But we will not be able to reach an agreement with Aston Villa. It simply doesn't work because we are not in a position where we have to do everything that others try to impose on us."

Bhatia's band of big hitters' £1.65bn boost for Liverpool

Continued from front

and net profit/loss from player sales. In addition, those who play in European competition, as Liverpool invariably do, must fall in line with Uefa's 70 per cent cap. "We are incredibly proud to be investing in Liverpool alongside FSG," Bhatia, who transferred his ownership in Queens Park Rangers last month, said. "To be welcomed as a partner in a club of this stature is a huge privilege."

Bhatia, the son-in-law of Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, has been speaking to high-ranking FSG figures for more than a year. He is viewed by FSG as the primary partner and has subsequently put together the group of investors. 1982 Holdings comprises the Bhatia and the Mittal Family Trusts, K5 Sports, with Bezos as the lead investor in the K5 Sports fund, and EE Capital, the family office of Elaine and Eduardo Saverin. Bezos was described as a passive investor by one source.

FSG bought the club in 2010 for £300 million and the existing Liverpool board is represented by principal owner John W Henry, chairman Tom Werner, Gordon, Mike Egan, Jonathan Bamber, Jenny Beacham and Sir Kenny Dalglish, who is a non-executive director.

The Liverpool supporters' group Spirit of Shankly (SOS) has contacted the football regulator and is seeking engagement with 1892 Holdings and Bhatia. "As Liverpool supporters, we need zero reminder of the importance of good governance and club ownership," said SOS, in a reference to the tumultuous regime of Tom Hicks and George Gillett, which preceded FSG's tenure. "We trust that the current owners FSG realise this, and have carried out their own due diligence because we as supporters will most certainly do our own.

"It is vital for the game in general that football clubs are run sustainably, as LFC has been, and not an arms race funded by mega-rich individuals or state-backed entities."

Amorim feels heat in Milan before reunion with United

New coach is yet to oversee a competitive game but the pressure is already building, says **Alasdair Mackenzie**

Since taking the reins as AC Milan head coach, Ruben Amorim has done his best to put a positive spin on his turbulent time at Manchester United.

"I made a lot of mistakes," he said at the end of July. "When you have that reflection, and you understand that it was not just their fault, but also my fault, you can be a better coach and a better man.

"[Milan] understood that I was prepared for this job not just because of my past success, but also because of my failures."

It was a fair line of argument with which to open a fresh chapter, seven months on from the 41-year-old's Old Trafford sacking.

But as Amorim prepares for a reunion with his former employers in the Polish city of Wroclaw today, some doubts are creeping in about how long it may take for his style and much discussed 3-4-2-1 system to bed in.

The Portuguese arrived brimming with enthusiasm, bullishly targeting the Serie A title as the club backed him by splashing out £60 million on the striker Gonçalo Ramos from Paris Saint-Germain and the defender Mario Gila from Lazio.

But a few weeks on, the mood has shifted. Milan are winless in three friendly games under Amorim, drawing with Celtic and Inter Milan before a heavy 3-0 defeat by Chelsea that drew criticism in the Italian media.

Corriere dello Sport said the performance "sounded the alarm" with the season opener against Torino coming up a week on Sunday, while Gazzetta dello Sport summed up the display with the headline: "They don't press, they don't sting, they don't run."

Such a reaction may seem exaggerated before a ball has been kicked competitively. But it speaks to a simple truth: this needs to work. And not just for Amorim.

This wounded giant of a club are coming off back-to-back failures to qualify for the Champions League and their owners, the American investment management firm RedBird, face an uphill battle to regain the trust of fans after four years of underperformance under Gerry Cardinale's leadership.

Cardinale rattled through four coaches in four seasons before Amorim's arrival and his fierce and immediate reaction to the club falling out of the top four on the final day of last season spoke of a man at the end of his tether.

The coach Massimiliano Allegri and the directors Giorgio Furlani, Igli Tare and Geoffrey Moncada were all dismissed within 24 hours as the club cited an "unequivocal failure". Another one, after finishing eighth in Serie A the year prior.

At Amorim's unveiling Cardinale outlined not only an expectation to compete, but to do so with style, throwing in a not-so subtle dig at Allegri's pragmatic football along the way. "We are going to play to win. We're not going to play not to lose," Cardinale said.

His demands were "a high press, high possession, attacking style of football". "It will be exciting football; fun to watch, high scoring," he added.

With a smile, Amorim replied: "No pressure."

But there is no avoiding the pressure. When RedBird took over in the summer of 2022 Milan fans were celebrating an unexpected Serie A title win.

But in the four years since they have failed to launch a serious title bid, with a run to the Champions League semi-finals in 2022-23 and their runners-up finish in 2023-24 proving to be anomalous achievements.

Milan's unpopular owners have rattled through coaches and enraged supporters by selling lifelong Milanista Sandro Tonali to Newcastle United and dismissing club legend Paolo Maldini as technical director less than a year after their takeover.

The nadir came when rivals Inter beat them to a sought-after "second star", representing 20 Scudetti, by clinching the 2023-24 title with victory in the Milan derby.

At the end of the following season Milan Ultras arranged themselves in the Curva Sud to spell out "Go home" in an unmistakable message for RedBird.

Amorim has walked into a world where patience from fans has been worn wafer-thin, and a fast start is therefore paramount.

The first impressions were positive. A club-record fee of about €70 million was splashed on Ramos while the capture of Spanish defender Gila was encouraging. Amorim's positivity and ambition struck a chord for a new era too.

"We want to win the second star. It's going to be really tough… we all can agree that the main goal at this moment is to be dominant in Italy," he said.

Man United v AC Milan

Pre-season friendly, Wroclaw Stadium
Kick-off: Today, 3.45pm
TV: MUTV

ANDREW MILLIGAN/PA; CLAUDIO VILLA/AC MILAN/GETTY IMAGES

Amorim has looked positive in training, left, but less so on the sidelines during a winless pre-season that has included a draw against Celtic, main

When the club were struck by tragedy last month by the death of club icon Franco Baresi, Amorim spoke well of wanting to continue his legacy.

However, it has been a slow start on the pitch. Transfer activity has ground to a halt, with 40-year-old Luka Modric signing on for another year but doubts remaining over the future of several players, none more so than Rafael Leão.

But the biggest concerns have surrounded Amorim's struggles to enact a significant change in style from the rigid and reactive football of Allegri. Lining up in his favoured 3-4-2-1 shape Amorim's side have not impressed thus far; they conceded six goals in three games and coughed up enough chances against Chelsea that the 3-0 defeat could have been much worse.

"Many things are different," the Milan defender Strahinja Pavlovic told Gazzetta. "We're trying to play with a high defensive line, and that will be the biggest difference. The coach wants us to press a lot more and always stay in the opponents' half."

After a 2-2 draw with Celtic in Glasgow, Amorim said Milan had to "improve everything, especially on the ball", but they needed a late Christopher Nkunku penalty to grab a draw against Inter in Australia before being outclassed by Chelsea in Indonesia.

"We knew we would suffer a little, but we want to put our players through this kind of challenge," he said afterwards.

"They know how to defend as a team, play one-on-one and press high. Against teams like Chelsea we would never press in this way, but we are here to prepare ourselves to win the first official match of the season and give the players confidence."

Amorim's words may sound familiar to United fans. He spoke of how they were "going to suffer for a long period" as early as after his debut draw with Ipswich Town, and it became a repeated theme throughout a tenure that ended with the Portuguese having the lowest league win percentage (31.9) of any United head coach by a considerable difference.

Confidence has been ebbing away rather than building among restless Milan fans, though. The Rossoneri failed to record a shot on target against Chelsea while two of their three pre-season goals have come from the penalty spot. Big-money signing Ramos is yet to score and legendary former coach Fabio Capello this week wrote that the team still look like "an open construction site".

There are, of course, mitigating factors. These are friendly matches. Amorim has experimented, changing his entire team in every game and trying out raw youngsters. Gila and star man Christian Pulisic have not been fit, while France stars Mike Maignan and Adrien Rabiot are yet to return from their post-World Cup break after controversially extending their holidays this week.

But Amorim made it clear there would be no excuses against United. "We'll approach that game, because it's the last one, thinking it will be a normal match, as if it were already Torino," he said.

"We'll be better against Manchester United. I have to say I'm really satisfied. I know it's hard to say after a 3-0 defeat, but I'm really pleased with the way everyone worked. They are trying to play differently, but we have a lot to do."

Amorim will not be judged on friendly matches but if a jaded and disillusioned fan base is to buy into his title ambitions before the season starts, they will want to see signs of progress in Poland.

Star names, big spending and more play-off spots

ROB NEWELL/CAMERASPORT/GETTY IMAGES

Bowen's decision to stay at West Ham has given their promotion hopes a boost

Sky Bet Championship

Joe Harston

THE TITLE CONTENDERS

With prolific Premier League-quality attackers such as Raúl Jiménez at **Wolverhampton Wanderers** and Jarrod Bowen at **West Ham United** playing in the Championship this season, the race for automatic promotion may feel like a closed shop. That West Ham have kept Bowen and their head coach, Nuno Espírito Santo, and have funds to replace Crysencio Summerville and Mateus Fernandes, should mean they are the clear favourites for the title. Wolves' squad looks in good shape too, with the 18-year-old Mateus Mané sure to light up the second tier.

The most likely challengers are **Middlesbrough** and **Southampton**, who have shared headlines since May because of "Spygate". Tonda Eckert's side have kept the core of their team from last season, but the four-point deduction, the FA investigation hanging over Eckert and the departure of Shea Charles are all potential hindrances.

Middlesbrough have had an eye-catching window. Their deal for Will Lankshear from Tottenham Hotspur could rise to £20 million if they are promoted, but he should bring the cutting edge they lacked last season.

THE CHASING PACK

This is how the **Wrexham** co-owner Ryan Reynolds explained the Welsh club's strategy this summer: "This episode is about making the kitchen work better rather than doing a whole-house renovation." The kitchen in question must be their defence. Danny Imray is a strong addition at right wingback and they seem to have added a solid goalkeeper in Anthony Patterson.

Birmingham City have brought back several former loanees and added Dael Fry from Middlesbrough to their already reliable defence. **Burnley** have the most work to do of the relegated sides. Their new head coach, Nicky Hayen, has no experience in this league but is well respected in Belgium, where he spent time with Club Bruges and Genk. His toughest task will be replacing the left winger Jaidon Anthony

Millwall finished third last season, so there is now pressure to reach those heights again. Alex Neil has more depth at his disposal in a fairly young squad, while they have the added motivation of sharing a division with West Ham for the first time since 2012.

THE BIG SPENDERS

The EFL has swapped its Profitability and Sustainability Rules for a squad-cost ratio system, which allows a club to spend up to 85 per cent of their revenue on players. **Norwich City** surprised Championship fans with their £8 million signing of Andre Brooks from Sheffield United. Ethan Galbraith is **Stoke City**'s most expensive purchase since 2018, having moved from Swansea City for £10 million. **Bristol City** are looking to reach the extended play-offs — with six spots, up from four, available — under their new head coach, Michael Skubala, and have spent a combined £9 million on Lorent Tolaj and Dom Ballard. **Preston North End** have broken their transfer record by signing Alfie Devine from Spurs for £4.5 million.

SURPRISE PACKAGES

Sheffield United have a team full of experience but a bizarrely inconsistent campaign last season makes them a difficult one to predict. **Swansea City** boast the league's top goalscorer, Zan Vipotnik, and have brought in the prolific but injury-prone Ross Stewart. **Watford** may never shake the reputation for sacking managers quickly and with Southampton, Wrexham and West Ham up first, the pressure could be on Alessio Dionisi quickly.

Derby County and **West Bromwich Albion** (eighth and 21st last season respectively) are two teams that could feasibly switch places.

WHO IS IN TROUBLE?

Like Derby, **Bolton Wanderers** and **Blackburn Rovers** could suffer due to a lack of spending given the squads they had last season. All eyes will be on **Lincoln City** in their first second-tier campaign since 1961. They have replaced Skubala with his assistants, Chris Cohen and Tom Shaw, which may be unorthodox but seems sensible. Their relegation fight is made harder by the fact that striker Jack Moylan has joined survival rivals **Cardiff City**.

Charlton Athletic will hope that Nathan Jones's experience can steer them to safety again, while **Queens Park Rangers** need their interesting signings, such as Glen Kamara and Tariq Lamptey, to turn things around after four consecutive bottom-half finishes. As long as **Portsmouth** have John Mousinho in charge, you would expect them to stay clear of trouble.

Villa remember hero Rimmer after death at 78

Aston Villa's 1981 First Division title-winning goalkeeper Jimmy Rimmer has died at the age of 78.

Rimmer, who was ever-present as Villa were crowned champions of England, is best remembered for being forced off with a neck injury after only nine minutes as the team won the European Cup the following year, beating Bayern Munich 1-0 in the final in Rotterdam.

It was the second time he had to watch his team-mates triumph without him in the final, having been on the bench 14 years earlier when Manchester United beat Benfica at Wembley.

In a statement, Villa said: "Aston Villa is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of European Cup winner Jimmy Rimmer. The thoughts of everyone at the club are with Jimmy's family and friends at this incredibly difficult time.

"Rimmer was one of the finest goalkeepers of his generation, and arguably one of the unluckiest when it came to big occasions. Despite collecting two European Cup winner's medals, he wasn't on the pitch at the end of either final."

The one-cap England international was replaced in the Rotterdam final by understudy Nigel Spink, who kept a clean sheet as Peter Withe hit the second-half winning goal to ensure Villa were crowned champions of Europe for the first and so far only time.

Spink went on to establish himself as No 1 at Villa Park, while Rimmer was sold to Swansea City a year later in 1983, having made more than 200 appearances for the club.

He began his career at Old Trafford but struggled to displace first-choice goalkeeper Alex Stepney, and was sold to Arsenal in 1974 before joining Villa three years later.

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Premier League paranoia driving Spanish spending

Barcelona and Real's raids on the top flight reflect Liga's obsession with broadcast popularity, writes **Ian Hawkey**

The league season begins this weekend for 18 new world champions. For Spain's La Liga, where each of them is or soon will be employed, there is no bashfulness in claiming reflected glory from the country's World Cup triumph. "The league, season after season, produces players, develops coaches and raises the level of global football," Liga president Javier Tebas said, congratulating the national team while reminding that his organisation and the players share a common pulse. "It is all our clubs who make this success possible, week in, week out."

But the arterial link between World Cup success and the victorious nation's domestic football is not always clear. Ask Ferran Torres, who last month wrote his name into legend by striking the only goal of the New Jersey final. He promptly saw the greatest moment of his professional life commemorated in a piece of wall art in the Gràcia district of Barcelona, a local would-be Banksy portraying the Barcelona forward kissing the World Cup trophy alongside the words "Making History".

Within hours, masked individuals had covered the mural with white paint and alternative messages: "F*** off Spain! We want Catalonia national teams!" To be the face of Spanish success in a region where *independentistas* are armed with spray paint and balaclavas can be a mixed blessing. Safe to report that, in the capital of Catalonia, Valencia-born Ferran's vital contributions to successive Liga titles with Barcelona will be remembered more fondly by more people than his achievements in a Spain jersey.

In any case, Ferran will shortly be packing up his many medals into a suitcase and migrating away from La Liga, an exit that has nothing to do with protest graffiti but a little to do with the heightened retail value attaching to a World Cup hero who, at 26, is still well within his peak. The €50 million (about £42.7 million) Paris Saint-Germain have agreed to pay for Ferran will then be channelled into a major repatriation project, namely an enhanced Barcelona offer — two have been rejected — to Manchester City to buy Rodri.

Spain's captain is eager to return to La Liga and adamant that if a Spanish superclub were to meet City's asking price, it would be the Liga champions rather than Real Madrid, who had sounded him out, he would most want to play for. Put brutally, Rodri's homecoming alternatives seemed simple: to anchor a Barcelona midfield where there could be three or four World Cup colleagues alongside him, and fellow world champions Pau Cubarsí and Lamine Yamal behind and in front of him; or to join a Real midfield whose two stalwarts, Fede Valverde and Aurélien Tchouameni, were in May fighting with one another at the club's training ground.

Mourinho, above, is back at Real, where he will be joined by Cucurella, below right, but he faces a significant challenge, with Barcelona flexing their spending power through the signing of Gordon, below left, and pursuit of Rodri, right

Real have already brought home one World Cup gold medallist, the full back Marc Cucurella, formely of Barcelona's youth academy. His presence in a heavily refashioned Real squad will at least re-establish the link between Spain's national team and its most famous club. Real, most unusually, had no players in the Spanish World Cup squad until Cucurella signed for them from Chelsea during the tournament. Real have meanwhile been serially rejecting Spanish coaches of late — both Xabi Alonso and Álvaro Arbeloa were sacked within the past nine months — and in June they recalled José Mourinho to the Bernabéu, 13 years after he finished his first spell there amid noisy fallouts with senior Real players who had been central to Spain's 2010 World Cup win.

Mourinho's challenge looks a towering one. Real have twice finished second to a Barcelona guided by Hansi Flick, a coach of bold attacking strategies and warm avuncularity towards his cohort of younger players. The advantages Real hold in spending power appear to be reducing now that Barcelona, back playing at a Nou Camp entering the later phases of its redevelopment, can present a healthier debt-management plan to the auditors of La Liga's Financial Fair Play.

Most of Barcelona's recent transfer windows have concluded with high-wire juggling of arrivals and departures to conform with severe budget restrictions; this summer's activity has been bullish by comparison: Anthony Gordon from Newcastle United and Karim Adeyemi from Borussia Dortmund for a combined €90 million; a planned third bid of more than €65 million for Rodri and a live ambition to prise the pricey Julián Alvarez from Atletico Madrid and so fill the vacancy at centre forward left by the departed Robert Lewandowski and Ferran and, occasionally last season, by Marcus Rashford.

With Gordon, Adeyemi and Lamine across the forward line, Flick's team will not want for acceleration. Speed up front at Real has been enhanced too, with the yoking of €140 million Yan Diomandé on to an attack spearheaded by Kylian Mbappé and Vinícius Jr, not to mention the added va-va-voom of Denzel Dumfries at full back, wingback or right midfield.

Like Barcelona, Real have raided the Premier League to strengthen, Bernardo Silva and Ibrahima Konaté joining upon the expiry of their contracts at City and Liverpool. So have Atletico, whose combative reputation, cultivated throughout the 14 years and counting of Diego Simeone's reign as head coach, can hardly be harmed by the imminent transfer of Cristian Romero from Tottenham Hotspur.

Real and Barcelona will start the campaign with a week's delay, because of their players' post-World Cup holidays. But all being well, by the first clásico of the campaign, in late October, two of England's finest rising talents, Gordon, 25, and Jude Bellingham, 23, of Real, will be among the star attractions. Their combined presence is a fillip for a league that sometimes seems obsessed to the point of paranoia about the higher spending and the global broadcast popularity of England's star-studded top division.

While the Premier League insatiably hires Spanish touchline expertise — including Alonso at Chelsea, Arbeloa at Fulham and Andoni Iraola at Liverpool — La Liga's superclubs can offer the persuasive argument to the likes of Gordon and Bellingham that Spain's club football, more than any other league, is where individual careers are best advanced. It is where all but two of the winners of the Ballon d'Or for the past 18 years have been employed at the time of their coronation.

But it is a league with rough edges. The sole Spanish club to have featured in a Uefa final last season, Conference League runners-up Rayo Vallecano, have spent much of the past month in doubt about where they will play home fixtures, their quaint, creaky Vallecas stadium deemed deficient in aspects of its safety. More random disruptions affect Celta Vigo, whose opening fixture of the 2026-27 campaign, against Osasuna, has been postponed because of a fungal outbreak on their Balaídos pitch. Less than a month ago the Spain striker Borja Iglesias was rolling about the grass of East Rutherford with the most valued medal in his sport around his neck. He will be wary about too close a contact with the turf of his Vigo home lest it causes him a nasty rash.

Celta have a Galicia derby to look forward to, with Deportivo La Coruña back in the top division after an eight-year absence and a deep plunge right down to the third tier for the club who, a quarter of a century ago, were defending Liga champions. Their survival plan includes Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, 37 and freshly arrived at the westernmost point of a long club career spanning all the leading leagues of Europe: Italy, France, Germany, England and Spain.

Malaga, aboard a similar rollercoaster to Deportivo since they last fell out of the Primera Division in 2018 but drawn even closer to full bankruptcy in that period, are back in the top flight. If they are to stay there it will largely be thanks to home-reared talent. And that's what Spain is good at — peerlessly good at on the evidence of the World Cup.

HARRY LANGER/DEFODI IMAGES/DEFODI/GETTY IMAGES

Meet the serve guru hired to end Draper's injury hell

Mexican, 61, fixed Fery's bone bruising and is now aiming to do same for former world No 4, writes **Tom Kershaw**

The serve whisperer who holds the key to British men's tennis does not advertise his services. Often Carlos Cano never even meets the players he works with, instead watching them train over video before communicating his advice to their coaches. But the role of a former chemical engineering student in the careers of Arthur Fery and Jack Draper should not be understated.

Before Fery's extraordinary run to the Wimbledon semi-finals this summer, he had struggled with bone bruising in his arm since 2024. Cano will not speak about his clients — he consults for 14 players — but a source close to Fery revealed it was the 61-year-old Mexican who remedied the persistent injury this year.

Draper's career has been hampered by the same problem for nearly 18 months, precipitating a steep drop from No 4 in the rankings last year to outside the cut-off for entry into the US Open main draw. It can be revealed Draper's team have now hired Cano too, as the 24-year-old tries to overcome the cycle of short-lived comebacks that culminated in emotional back-to-back first-round defeats in Montreal and Cincinnati.

"The serve is one of the most complex movements in sport," Cano says from his training base in New Jersey. "The ones who are very, very good servers, they don't use power as a model. My main models — I don't want to name names — but at least three or four of them are considered the top ten in the history of servers, and they are not in the [record books].

"These players have had a 20-year career and never had injuries. I don't use the technique of players who were six, seven, eight years in the system and ended their career with problems."

In an era where coaches are prone to self-promotion, Cano is a largely unknown figure outside tennis's innermost circles. He began playing tennis in Monterrey aged 14. Though he never competed at a high level he became obsessed with studying how players moved, identifying patterns and understanding how energy was transferred through the body.

A pioneer of video analysis, he initially recorded players on Betamax hitting shots in a theatre because the technology was not advanced enough to use outside. By the time he was 22, word had spread about Cano's insights and he abandoned his degree and joined the Mexican Tennis Federation, where he developed one of the first on-court video systems. Years spent as the right-hand man to José Higueras, who coached Michael Chang, Jim Courier and Pete Sampras, brought Cano into contact with some of the greats of a generation and he further developed his theories.

Cano, pictured with a US college player, is helping Draper, below

Since 2002 he has worked at CourtSense, the academy founded by Gordon Uehling, who was dubbed "the world's most high-tech tennis coach" by the New Yorker magazine and is a longtime adviser to Novak Djokovic. Cano again refuses to name any clients, but he does confirm they include grand-slam champions.

"I need four basic areas to develop as a coach," Cano says. "The first one is biomechanics. Obviously that is what I use the most. I need to understand physiology. I need to understand pedagogy, because it is an art, and also I need to understand the sport. Through my experience, I had the opportunity to do this and develop the system I use to help players."

After a player's team approaches Cano — "I do zero advertising. I'm proud of that. It's nothing other than word of mouth" — he begins with a detailed analysis of their serve. Often a coach will turn to a biomechanist such as Cano because their player is suffering from recurrent injuries.

Cano cites the rotator cuff, obliques, ribs and elbow as common problem areas, prompted by techniques that do not transfer power in one fluid motion and put stress on smaller muscles. Bone bruising, when blood pools inside the bone because of repeated trauma, can be complex as it does not show up on x-rays and damage can occur before pain is felt.

"The problem in tennis is you have to be serving 150 to 180 serves a day, six days a week, 40 to 45 weeks a year," Cano says. "If you go in a tree and you jump on a branch that is not that strong, you can jump for a year, two years, but sooner or later, it's going to fatigue and it's going to break. It's the same concept."

The nuances of the serve mean there can be manifold technical problems. When it comes to bone bruising, the issue is often a result of the hitting arm coming at the ball from too wide an angle. That could be caused by the ball toss being too far towards the side of the serving arm or a desynchronisation during the motion, but addressing one technical point in isolation can put strain on a different part of the body that is forced to compensate.

Draper, for example, changed his stance last year to reduce the load on his left arm, but it put more pressure on his right knee and he missed the clay-court season after aggravating a tendon. "Some people are more flexible, some people are stronger, some people have longer limbs, but I believe the way the body operates is the same," Cano says. "I divide the serve into eight stages and I try to be sure the alignment and timing in every stage is the same."

First, the body has to be prepared for a rebuilt service action. "Normally [when the arm is coming too wide], the pec minor is very tight," Cano says. "Sometimes it's because of a problem with the rotator cuff. You have to be sure the area is injury-free because, if not, even if you do the correct technique, the energy keeps flowing through the joint or bone, the vibration continues and it doesn't help. By creating the right flexibility and mobility, the player is able to get to the right position when he doesn't need to compensate."

A doctor at CourtSense will co-ordinate that process with a player's team. Once the player is deemed physically ready, the next stage is to rebuild the basic movement of the serve by, for example, altering the alignment and ball toss. Cano uses visual demonstrations and exercises with very light weights to help ingrain the new motion.

Only once the new technique is established do they begin focusing on exercises that improve the body mechanics before finally integrating the new pattern into training and match play. "It depends on the injury, but normally from the restructure, when I am sure the player is healthy and can start to create the basic movements, it takes one to three months to implement," Cano says.

Fery had struggled with bone bruising on and off since 2024, restricting him to about 40 to 80 serves a day. After breaking into the world's top 200 at the end of 2025, the pain flared up again after the Australian Open in January, forcing him to take six weeks off. "After Australia, Arthur got hurt again," Jeroen Benard, Fery's coach, explained during Wimbledon. "So we changed the serve, his biomechanics. It's an ongoing process, and clearly that's working out because he doesn't have any pain any more."

Fery's serve is not the most powerful, averaging about 120mph, but he demonstrated great variety during his Wimbledon run and served particularly well in high-pressure moments, winning 77 per cent of his serve points at 30-30 or deuce.

Draper is much earlier on in the development process — he served 12 double faults in his defeat by Martin Landaluce in Cincinnati on Thursday — but his priority for the time being is to stay healthy enough to play back-to-back events. His desperation to recover his ranking has been difficult to balance with the patience required to let the injury heal and implement changes but, after such a long ordeal, Draper may finally be on the right track to finding the solution he desperately needs, with Cano's help.

Root has changed – judge captaincy on present, not past

Mike Atherton
Chief Cricket Correspondent

Subscribers to the Sunday Times who read the former prime minister Rishi Sunak's column regularly will have occasionally noticed a small undercurrent of "if only." He has been open enough to write of mistakes and there is a sense that, if he could do it all over again, he might approach things a little differently; pay more heed, perhaps, to the important stuff and less to the urgent, a problem compounded by what he described as the "tyranny of polling".

Often, when leaders rise to a position, they are given various bits of well-meaning advice, one of which is usually: "Do it your way" or, along the same lines: "Don't have any regrets when you finish." Easier said than done, of course, but the reason is obvious: very few are given a second chance in a high-profile, responsible position. You get one go at it.

Joe Root, therefore, finds himself in the most unusual position as he embarks on a second crack at the England captaincy. He already brings to it the experience of 65 Tests as captain; he has done it his way, for good and bad, more than anyone else. Now he gets the chance given to very few, to put all that experience and wisdom to work, and do things a little differently than before. How many would love that opportunity?

I spent some time with him this week in Cardiff, before Welsh Fire's last game in the Hundred (how big a missed opportunity has it been, by the way, not seeing the likes of Jonny Bairstow, Ben Stokes, Harry Brook and Root playing together for the northern franchise, thus exploiting the inbuilt tribalism the ECB craves?). Putting aside the rights and wrongs of his appointment — I saw him as the only option once Brendon McCullum staked his claim to Harry Brook and the white-ball captaincy — I sensed someone genuinely enthused by the opportunity.

Given he has admitted to having an "unhealthy" relationship with the job by 2021, how could he be sure that he wouldn't be damaged again? His answer was framed around the particular context of Covid last time, and the stifling restrictions he had to endure. It was a fair answer: Covid was a shocker for everyone, and the England team were the tool by which the game here survived financially. During that time, from the outbreak in 2020 until the end of Root's captaincy in 2022, England played 26 Tests to Australia's 12.

He said he got sucked into areas a captain would not usually be involved with, adding to his burden. In his first stint, he was the type of captain to take everything on his shoulders (I remember small things, like picking up the fielding helmet in between overs, when someone else should have been doing that). He will be better placed now to focus on the things that really matter and he will find it easier to say no to the things that don't.

Is he accepting the job again out of duty or desire? I sensed the latter: he is excited for the opportunity to put his wisdom and experience to good use and he sounded enthused about the pace attack at his disposal. England are well placed for middle-order dashers and pace bowlers — less so for top-order batsmen and spinners — but any captain who commands a decent pace attack has half a chance.

He expressed some regret over how he handled Jofra Archer the first time around — "I didn't get everything right," he said. The expectation is that he will use Archer more sparingly, though at the Oval against New Zealand in June he did bowl him in an eight-over spell. With others, such as Josh Tongue and Gus Atkinson having stepped up since the retirements of Jimmy Anderson and Stuart Broad, Root has some decent ammunition at his disposal.

Root trod the line delicately between being loyal to what has gone before, while sounding determined to put his own stamp on things. He said he was "gutted" about McCullum's departure. Root has made no secret of the fact that McCullum was good for him as a cricketer and batsman, and he still has to work with the coach in the ODI side, but, equally, he said he was optimistic about Stephen Fleming, someone he enjoyed watching as a young man.

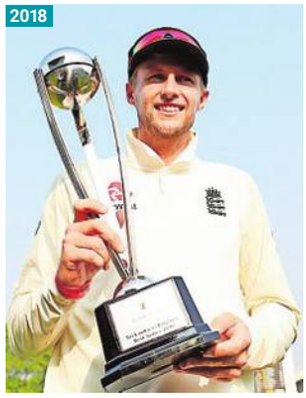
The balance will be to keep the bits of "Bazball" that worked, while making this *his* team again. The most important thing Root said was that he does not want to impose a predetermined style. Ultimately, every game for the Bazballers became framed around how ag-

Extending his lead

Root has already captained more Tests than any Englishman in history

		Tests	W%
JE Root	2017-2026	65	41.53
AN Cook	2010-2016	59	40.67
MA Atherton	1993-2001	54	24.07
MP Vaughan	2003-2008	51	50.98
AJ Strauss	2006-2012	50	48
N Hussain	1999-2003	45	37.77
BA Stokes	2020-2026	44	54.54
PBH May	1955-1961	41	48.78
GA Gooch	1988-1993	34	29.41
DI Gower	1982-1989	32	15.62
JM Brearley	1977-1981	31	58.06
R Illingworth	1969-1973	31	38.7

Source: ESPNCricinfo



Winfield-Hill and Baker steer dominant Sunrisers Leeds into final

Sunrisers Leeds Women v Southern Brave Women
The Oval Sunrisers Leeds win by five wickets

The Hundred
Elizabeth Ammon

Sunrisers Leeds dominated a one-sided contest against Southern Brave and will meet Trent Rockets in tomorrow's women's final thanks to the experience of the former England batter Lauren Winfield-Hill.

The Sunrisers' team song was written by Winfield-Hill and was belted out for the fifth match in succession as she and the player of the match, Hannah Baker, led them to a five-wicket win with 11 balls to spare.

Sunrisers Leeds are technically the defending champions although have had a change of owner, kit, name and players since then, but the experience of Winfield-Hill and the calm head of the India star Deepti Sharma led a comfortable run chase. They had restricted Brave — who had lost their past three matches, having been hit by the injury to the India batter Jemimah Rodrigues — to a modest 114 for seven.

South Africa's Lizelle Lee got Brave off to a decent start, reaching 27 off 20 balls in the powerplay, but she was smartly stumped by Winfield-Hill in what proved to be a decisive bit of glovework off the bowling of Baker.

Lee was the only Brave batter to find any fluency with the bat. Australia's Sophie Molineux put on 33 with Charli Knott for the fourth wicket after the experienced heads of Laura Wolvaardt and Maia Bouchier fell cheaply, but not even three late front-foot no-balls could help them get to a defendable total — they were probably 20 short of a par score.

Baker, the 22-year-old leg spinner from Warwickshire who played two ODIs for England in 2024, was exceptional with the ball, taking two wickets and conceding only 13 runs from her 20 balls. She bowled with admirable control, making use of the conditions.

Sunrisers' journey to the final has been led by the Australia pair of Phoebe Litchfield and Annabel Sutherland, who are the leading runscorers this year, but both fell cheaply in this chase. There is real depth in Sunrisers' batting, though, and Sharma, coming in at No 5, higher than her usual position, showed all of her class and experience in her unbeaten 28 from 22 balls. She gave excellent support to Winfield-Hill, who led from the front with a run-a-ball 37. Winfield-Hill was bowled by Issy Wong but by then Sunrisers had broken the back of the chase and a little cameo of ten off five balls from Jess Jonassen saw the Headingley team to victory.

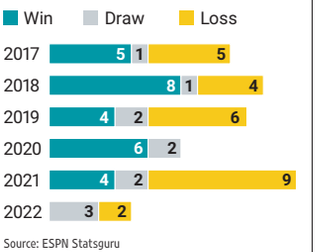
It is a remarkable turnaround for Sunrisers, having lost three of their first four matches, and they will meet Trent Rockets at Lord's tomorrow. Both the men's and women's teams at Trent Bridge have had a remarkable season, with the women winning seven from eight in the group stage and their men six from eight. They won the new "Helix Cup", which is the combined men's and women's points trophy, well before the end of the group stage.

Rockets women are greater than the sum of their parts, with contributions all through their ranks, from their big stars to the lesser known domestic players, and are exceptionally well led by their coach, the former Nottinghamshire and England wicketkeeper Chris Read. With the form that Sunrisers and Rockets are in, it should be a compelling final.

Who reached the men's final? Leeds Sunrisers against Manchester Super Giants finished too late for our deadline last night. Go online now at **thetimes.com/sport**

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER BRADLEY ORMESHER; DINUKA LIYANAWATTE/REUTERS; MIKE EGERTON/PA

England year by year under Joe Root as permanent captain



Source: ESPN Statsguru

gressively or otherwise they would play. Having been around so long, Root knows the Test game is not quite so simple and demands more nuance, although he emphasised he would look to take the game on.

His first decision has been to abandon the curfew. Hallelujah. Curfews are a nonsensical way to run a professional sporting outfit and Root rightly called for common sense instead. Players know what is right and wrong. They don't always get it right and disciplinary action can be imposed if they make mistakes (which young cricketers will) but part of the process of getting players to take good decisions on the field is about giving them responsibility off it. They have to take ownership of this themselves and look after each other.

There is lots that Root can do differently second time around. He should, though, be himself and not try to be Stokes, or whoever. Players are not stupid and see through anything that is not authentic.

Above all, he is keen to be judged afresh, though doubtful that will happen: "I think the hardest thing for me will be people's opinion of how I captained four years ago. And I think it's very important to remember, and for me to remember, that I'm a completely different player to what I was four years ago. I've had four more years of experience in a very different environment, which has opened my eyes up in many different ways," he said.

That is fair enough. For us all, whether correspondents, pundits or supporters, he deserves to be judged on how he does now, not how he did four years ago. We must try to leave our preconceptions behind. He has done it more than any other England player, but it is a fresh start and must be judged fairly, but unsparingly, on the present, not the past.

How rugby league has become even stricter than union

Elgan Alderman joins the four-man panel who review on-field calls and clamp down on punches and shoulder charges

The clock has ticked past 1pm on a Monday afternoon and four men are reviewing their sixth Super League match of the weekend. They started at 9.30am. The conversation is lively as they consider the danger in a two-man tackle by Toulouse Olympique on George O'Loughlin, of Wigan Warriors.

Shortly after 2pm, the match review panel (MRP) concludes its duties. Paul Cullen, Paul Dixon and Nathan McAvoy, three former players, in conjunction with Gavin Wild, compliance manager of the Rugby Football League, have been here for almost five hours, punctuated by two short breaks. They reckon three hours is standard; it can go as high as six.

The quartet are here to sanction on-field misconduct. Bans and fines are a thread of every sport and the RFL has welcomed The Times into the room to see how it happens every Monday morning in Manchester.

Cullen (350 appearances for Warrington) is the chairman of the MRP, supported by McAvoy (193 Super League appearances; four international caps) and Dixon (15 caps for Great Britain). Cullen and Dixon played in the Eighties and Nineties, when both codes of rugby were rough and extrajudicial. Cullen's nickname was "Psycho", owing to the ferocity of his defence. McAvoy was of the Nineties and Noughties, retiring because of injuries.

It was not that long ago in either code of rugby that players received warnings for punching, whereas now such acts are rare and would lead to immediate red cards. Shoulder charges were a huge, highlight-forming part of league and are no longer permitted, to improve safety and limit head injuries.

The word I hear more than any other during the meeting is "flexion"; the effect on the head and neck of a tackle. The panel rules on much more than that. Cullen explains that there are about 500 contacts in each of the seven games of Super League per weekend. Between them, they will cover the whole round and will flag about ten incidents per fixture that require further inspection. They will consider the cause of every injury and head injury assessment, as well as any other tackles that arouse suspicion. Their job is not to re-referee the game, and they don't judge what they flag by the official's on-field view.

"I'm the most unpopular man in Super League," Cullen says. It is his job to phone coaches and tell them their players have been fined or banned. They do not always take it lightly. If the coach strongly disagrees, they can challenge the decision on a Tuesday before a judge, though that costs money. There have been four appeals this season. "It's robust; it's challengeable," Cullen says. "It's in-depth and it works."

They disagree on certain incidents, but majority prevails and Cullen presents the view of the panel to coaches. During the meeting, short clips of incidents are watched and rewatched, the panel interrogating cause, outcome and intention, what the defender could, and should, have done differently.

If the panel decides misconduct has occurred, the player receives a charge. The system is akin to points on a driving licence. Caleb Hamlin-Uele, of Wakefield Trinity, is deemed to have committed a grade A offence for late contact on the passer and receives one penalty point, taking him to 1.5 in the previous 12 months. He falls short of the threshold for a fine, which would be 0.5 per cent of salary.

Thirteen players received sanctions this week. Five are for late contact on the passer and kicker. Through a rugby union lens, some of these seemed harsh; the 15-man game may not have viewed them as punishable acts. The protection of players after they have offloaded possession of the ball, in that uncertain window of whether the defender was "committed", provides reminders of the NFL.

Moments that generate the strongest debate are not the cut-and-dry acts of illegality. With O'Loughlin, the discussion revolves around whether he rotated his own body to get to the floor as quickly as possible, or if the Toulouse defenders were responsible for a dangerous lift.

A late tackle by Harvey Barron for Hull FC against St Helens provokes another lengthy discussion that demonstrates the fine margins of play in elite sport. Barron blitzed from the wing to shut off an attack near the tryline. Get it right and it is excellent defence. But the St Helens player did not catch the ball. Was it a drop or a flick pass? If the attacker had caught the ball, Barron's actions would have been fine, but in the short time that it becomes clear he does not have it, he is expected to adjust his actions and not make contact. "We see it all the time where players have got the ball, we still see flexion, but it is legitimate, it's within the context of the game," McAvoy says.

Some observers may think such reviews go too far, but the headline statistic is that approximately 0.4 per cent of contacts in the weekend have led to a sanction. Even the panel accepts there is still place for a bit of niggle on the field. "There's no charge for general shithousery," Cullen says.

Challenges by two men on a single opponent are among those reviewed

'Hundred jam won't be spread thinner'

Elizabeth Ammon

The Hundred will not take up more of the cricket calendar, the head of the ECB has promised, despite new team owners wanting to play more matches.

The tournament has a 27-day window each year when the schedule is cleared of international and first-class cricket. Richard Gould, the ECB chief executive, is adamant that the Hundred will not require an extended window, even if there are more games.

Privately, some team owners have expressed a desire to have more than four home matches, in an effort to increase revenue and develop a partisan home fan base. They feel that four games is not enough to maximise sponsorship and ticket income, and from a cricket perspective it means teams cannot recover if they have a poor start.

Gould did not rule out more matches being played in the future but said they would need to take place within the existing window, so there may have to be more games played each day. At present there is one men's and one women's match a day, except at the weekends, when games are played at two venues.

This year's Hundred, the first under the new private ownership, culminates at Lord's tomorrow. Despite an overall dip in ticket sales, tournament organisers remain positive about the growth of the controversial competition and say the average TV audience this year, on Sky Sports and the BBC, was up 7.5 per cent. "We want people to understand it is a time-limited window," Gould said.

"That window will not get any longer. What happens within that window is up to team members and the Hundred board. We've got to be really careful about trying to go broad and spreading the jam thinner, whereas something like Wimbledon does brilliantly on all metrics with a two-week window."

Gould also floated the prospect of some women's games being standalone matches rather than part of a double-header, as all games are at present.

"There are opportunities for additional revenue streams, maybe by splitting those games up, not just having more games. The teams are really engaged with trying to drive the Hundred forward again," he said.

Sport Rugby union

Absurd reality of a rugby pre-season

Will Collier

Castres and former England tight-head prop

CASTRES OLYMPIQUE

Collier, seated far left, with the Castres squad during pre-season, which has involved a team camp in the Alps. While at Harlequins he trained with the Gurkas, below

From wildfires to drought, the soaring summer temperatures have had many and varied repercussions. In the past few weeks, the one I have become intimately and painfully aware of is the suffering of a pre-season conducted in extreme heat.

It is an unintended, unforeseen, and largely overlooked, consequence of all of these heatwaves, but it has been a particularly brutal patch of training for us lot. In Castres, in the south of France, temperatures have often topped 40C in the past few months.

I know this may sound like the moanings of an old, negative prop, but having gone through 18 pre-seasons now, I have just about done it all: army camps, sleeping on forest floors, boxing, riot training, "milling", hill sprints, cross country, tyre flipping, wrestling, taekwondo, jiu jitsu and cross fit, to name but a few. I write this now from 2,100m above sea level in the Alps at La Plagne. I still have the metallic taste in my mouth from trying to suck in air.

The highlights? A taekwondo instructor trying his best to teach us that bending opposition fingers at certain angles will weaken their maul. And the "milling".

That is a 60-second test of aggression used during selection for the British Army's Parachute Regiment. It was introduced when I was still a young player at Harlequins. You have groups of three: one defending, taking the punches, and two attacking, trying to land as many as possible.

It was made worse by the fact that our old tight-head prop, the 150kg legend James Johnston, misheard the rules of engagement. I was the defender and he was supposed to be punching me. Instead, he was punching the other attacker next to him while I started punching him. This resulted in a brutal ring of rib-breakers, which continued for a whole minute until we all collapsed laughing through our aching sides.

It is a strange time of the year to be a rugby player. Strength and conditioning coaches stalk around training grounds like medieval torturers, starved of victims for too long. They smile, giddy with sadistic excitement, while rugby balls gather dust. Most of my last week of holiday each year is spent on the weather apps, checking the next week's temperatures. This July, it did not look pretty.

Arriving at the first Monday of training, you could sense the usual nerves among the team. The factor-50 suncream I had lathered on my face quickly sweated off and started to sting my eyes. The boys were on edge. "It's 40C tomorrow! They'll have to adjust training," some cried. "We can't do a bronco [fitness] test in this!"

In our first meeting, our conditioning coach stood up to address the lads. He did nothing to ease our nerves. "Don't worry, boys," he said in French. "We'll use this heat to our advantage." He went on to explain that these higher temperatures would make training tougher and so, by default, we'd actually get fitter. *Merde.*

And so *accablant* — exhausting/overwhelming/oppressive — has become my new favourite French word. *"Ce Wattbike est accablant! Cette chaleur est accablant! Ce bronco demain sera accablant!"*

You might not be fluent in French, but you get the idea.

The conditioning coach then announced that the dreaded "bronco" test would take place. When I signed in the Top 14, I thought I had left that part of my career behind. Reports from well-placed sources in France were that broncos hadn't yet crossed the channel. They were wrong.

The bronco is a 1,200m running test consisting of 20m and back, 40m and back, 60m and back, repeated five times continuously. It sounds simple enough, but for us larger men, those turns quickly add up and by the last repetitions you are wading through treacle.

If any of my previous — or current — conditioning coaches happen to read this, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify my stance. The bronco is a stupid test and far too much onus is placed upon it. How about we do a scrum session for the backs and see how they get on, eh? I thought not.

However, I have done enough of these by now to know the drill: just get through it, control your breathing, focus on the third and fourth reps when you are really in the hole, use the first and second to find your pace, and then by the fifth you're in such a dark place that there is no thinking, so it just takes care of itself. That's my strategy anyway.

At the end of it you are greeted with the usual — bodies strewn across the floor, gagging and vomiting, amplified by the overwhelming heat. And then, in this case, the medical team gathered around someone on the floor. It turns out one of the boys ruptured his achilles tendon turning on the fourth rep. *Accablant*, indeed.

I read an awful story the other day about the Fijian player Saimoni Vunilagi, who died of heatstroke at his Japanese club Kyuden Voltex, after training in 35C heat in Fukuoka. Blessedly, our coaches do know where the line is and when to stop. They know better than most when to pull players back and how to look after us. The ice box that is dragged onto the pitch with cold towels whenever we have a break is always gladly received.

As negative as this all sounds, I do have to concede that this time of year also offers some of the best chances for "team building". I have had some great trips forged by the idea of bonding the squad tightly and getting to know your team-mates.

One of the army camps we were sent on with Harlequins was down in Folkestone with the Gurkha regiment. After spending a few days with those lads, the bronco suddenly doesn't seem quite so bad, especially when they casually describe one of their many selection phases: the infamous doko race. Recruits run an uphill course carrying a doko — a bamboo basket holding 25kg of sand — using only a strap across the forehead. You go through roughly 5.5km of climbing, and have to complete the course in under 43 minutes. Miss the cut-off and selection ends there.

Perspective seeps in: you realize what tough is and also how privileged we are to do what we do.

So when the suncream next hits my eyes and my brain fogs over with fatigue, I will truck solemnly on for the 18th year in a row.

When we are in the depths of winter, away at Bayonne, or La Rochelle, and I'm packing down on the tight-head again, it will all be worth it. I'll be doing what I love in one of the world's great leagues for another season. Allons-y.

RESULTS

Athletics

European Championships

Alexander Stadium, Birmingham: Finals: Leadlng positions: Women: 10,000m 1, N Battocletti (It) 31min 41.20sec; 2, M Koster (Neth) 31:45.80; 3, J Van Lent (Bel) 31:47.80.

Leading medals

	G	S	B	Total
1, Great Britain	4	3	1	**8**
2, Italy	4	2	1	**7**
3, Germany	2	3	4	**9**
4, Netherlands	2	2	2	**6**
5, Switzerland	2	1	0	**3**
6, Norway	2	0	2	**4**

Cricket

The Hundred eliminators: Men
Manchester Super Giants v Sunrisers Leeds

Kia Oval (Sunrisers Leeds won toss): Manchester Super Giants beat Sunrisers Leeds by 20 runs

Manchester Super Giants	(balls)	
T L Seifert c Ellis b Carse	0	(2)
P I Walter run out	80	(46)
*†J C Buttler c Carse b Potts	33	(20)
H Klaasen c Brook b Ellis	63	(26)
M G Bracewell not out	4	(6)
Extras (lb 2, w 4)	6	
Total (4 wkts, 100 balls)	**186**	

J L du Plooy, L A Dawson, A A P Atkinson, N A Lakanwal, J C Tongue and S Baker did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-0, 2-57, 3-171, 4-186.

Bowling Carse 20-11-22-1; Lawes 20-5-48-0; Potts 20-4-38-1; Ellis 20-7-28-1; Revis 15-1-38-0; Patterson-White 5-0-10-0.

SunRisers Leeds	(balls)	
M R Marsh c Baker b Tongue	10	(6)
†R D Rickelton not out	54	(34)
*Z Crawley lbw b Tongue	6	(3)
H C Brook lbw b Baker	49	(31)
D W Lawrence c du Plooy b Tongue	2	(4)
M L Revis c Seifert b Baker	4	(5)
L A Patterson-White c Walter b Tongue	17	(8)
B A Carse c du Plooy b Dawson	6	(4)
T E Lawes not out	11	(6)
Extras (lb 3, nb 1, w 3)	7	
Total (7 wkts, 100 balls)	**166**	

M J Potts and N T Ellis did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-10, 2-17, 3-98, 4-103, 5-107, 6-133, 7-154.

Bowling Atkinson 20-8-35-0; Tongue 20-11-26-4; Baker 20-6-39-2; Bracewell 10-2-19-0; Ahmad 20-9-31-0; Dawson 10-6-13-1.

Women: Sunrisers Leeds v Southern Brave

Kia Oval (Sunrisers Leeds won toss): Sunrisers Leeds beat Southern Brave by five wickets

Southern Brave	(balls)	
†L Lee st Winfield-Hill b Baker	32	(25)
M E Bouchier c Sutherland b Sharma	15	(17)
L Wolvaardt b Cross	8	(7)
*S G Molineux not out	22	(24)
C R Knott b Baker	25	(21)
J L Grewcock c Litchfield b Sutherland	5	(5)
N D Dattani c Smith b Sutherland	0	(1)
I E C M Wong run out	4	(3)
Extras (nb 3)	3	
Total (7 wkts, 100 balls)	**114**	

S Glenn, L K Bell and M R Corteen-Coleman did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-41, 2-54, 3-56, 4-89, 5-108, 6-108, 7-114.

Bowling McCarthy 10-6-10-0; Cross 10-6-12-1; Jonassen 15-7-13-0; Sutherland 20-5-31-2; Baker 20-11-13-2; Gibson 10-2-11-0; Sharma 15-4-24-1.

Sunrisers Leeds	(balls)	
B F Smith c Lee b Bell	2	(8)
P E S Litchfield b Wong	4	(4)
†L Winfield-Hill b Wong	37	(37)
A J Sutherland c Molineux b Glenn	17	(12)
D B Sharma not out	28	(22)
*D R Gibson lbw b Wong	0	(1)
J L Jonassen not out	10	(5)
Extras (b 8, lb 2, w 8)	18	
Total (5 wkts, 89 balls)	**116**	

D E M Carter, K L Cross, C M McCarthy and H L Baker did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-12, 2-13, 3-54, 4-95, 5-95.

Bowling Bell 19-12-14-1; Corteen-Coleman 20-6-26-0; Wong 20-8-21-3; Molineux 15-5-20-0; Glenn 15-3-25-1.

Metro Bank Cup quarter-finals

Emirates Old Trafford Durham 349-8 (D Bedingham 104); Lancashire 187. *Durham won by 162 runs.* **Clifton Park** Yorkshire 273-9 (W Bennison 91); Notts Outlaws 277-7 (Jack Haynes 116 not out, K Verreynne 105; B Coad 5 for 52). *Notts won by three wickets.*

Golf

DP World Tour Danish Championship

Kerteminde, Funen: Leaders after two rounds (Great Britain and Ireland unless stated): **133** A Rozner (Fr) 69, 64; C Adam 70, 63. **134** E Ferguson 69, 65. **135** M Jordan 68, 67; R Langasque (Fr) 69, 66; B Stone (SA) 66, 69; J Perico (Per) 69, 66; C Surratt (US) 69, 66. **136** B Watson (US) 68, 68; Zhou Yanhan (China) 69, 67.

US PGA Tour FedEx St Jude Championship

Memphis, Tennessee: Leading first-round scores (United States unless stated): **65** J Knapp, M Kim, M Thorbjornsen, J Spieth, K Kitayama. **66** Im Sungjae (S Kor), C Gotterup, B Cauley, A Scott (Aus), T Fleetwood (Eng), G Woodland, H Matsuyama (Japan). **67** Lee Min-woo (Aus), S Burns, X Schauffele, P Rodgers.

VP Bank Swiss Women's Open

Rotkreuz: Leaders after two rounds (Great Britain and Ireland unless stated): **130** K Arwefjaell (Swe) 64, 66. **133** A Foster 67, 66; W Hillier (Aus) 66, 67, **134** C Williams 66, 68; A Försterling (Ger) 66, 68; E Givens 68, 66.

LPGA Tour Standard Portland Classic

Portland, Oregon: Leading first-round scores (United States unless stated): **65** M Galdiano. **66** B Pagdanganan (Phil), Choi Hye-jin (S Kor), L Walsh (Ire), G Kim (Aus), O Cowan (Ger), A Yubol (Thai), M J Marin (Col).

Snooker

China Open

Taiyuan City: Quarter-finals (England unless stated): S Bingham bt Zhang Anda (China) 6-3; M Selby bt N Robertson (Aus) 6-1; Zhou Yuelong (China) bt D Gilbert 6-5; N Saengkham (Thai) bt S Murphy 6-4.

Tennis

ATP National Bank Open

Montreal: Final B Shelton (US) bt B Nakashima (US) 6-3, 7-6 (7-4).

WTA National Bank Open

Toronto: Final I Swiatek (Pol) bt E Rybakina (Kaz) 6-2, 6-3.

Cincinnati Open

First round: Men S Tsitsipas (Gr) bt V Royer (Fr) 7-6 (7-4), 7-5; M Bellucci (It) bt Z Svajda (US) 7-6 (7-0), 7-6 (7-4); S Báez (Arg) bt G Dimitrov (Bul) 1-6, 6-3, 6-4; R Hijikata (Aus) bt G Monfils (Fr) 2-7, 7-6 (7-5), 6-3; D Altmaier (Ger) bt C Wong (HK) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Q Halys (Fr) bt V Kopriva (Cz) 7-6 (7-5), 6-4; P Carreño Busta (Sp) bt T Machac (Cz) 6-3, 6-2; A Vallejo (Par) bt K Jacquet (Fr) 6-2, 6-4; Y Hanfmann (Ger) bt L Van Assche (Fr) 6-2, 6-4; H Hurkacz (Pol) bt S Shimabukuro (Japan) 6-2, 6-4; M Berrettini (It) bt T Droguet (Fr) 3-6, 6-1, 6-4. **Women** S Bejlek (Cz) bt K Pliskova (Cz) 6-0, 6-2; J Bouzas Maneiro (Sp) bt A Bondar (Hun) 6-3, 7-6 (7-5); D Snigur (Ukr) bt Y Starodubtseva (Ukr) 6-4, 6-3; L Stefanini (It) bt E Cocciaretto (It) 5-3 ret; N Bartunkova (Cz) bt A Charaeva (Arm) 4-6, 6-4, 6-3; A Blinkova (Russ) bt M Sawangkaew (Thai) 1-6, 6-2, 6-3; P Stearns (US) bt H Dart (GB) 6-1, 7-6 (8-6); E Arango (Col) bt V Williams (US) 6-2, 6-2.

England's next big things: U18s whose size and skill stand out

Highly physical squad, with a 6ft 9in lock, can confirm potential against South Africa, writes **Charlie Morgan**

Given the inexorable impetus behind rugby union across the Channel, any victory over France should be celebrated — let alone one that features 40 points and a spell with 13 players. England Under-18 managed this on Tuesday in Paarl, scoring six tries in the process.

Most summers since 2009, barring a Covid-induced break of a few years, an age-group festival in South Africa has provided a valuable learning experience for the most promising teenagers in this country. Owen Farrell, George Ford and both Vunipola brothers were in the inaugural cohort, and many luminaries have passed through since. In 2022, for example, skipper Henry Pollock turned the air blue with his post-match television interview by proclaiming himself "f***ing buzzing" with a victory.

The trip is regarded as one of the most significant components of the pathway programme: memorable for the players as well as an insightful development milestone for coaches. It provides a window into South Africa's all-consuming passion for the sport too.

This week England have been staying within a stone's throw of Paul Roos Gimnasium, a powerhouse of the schoolboy game that will house about 25,000 spectators today for the visit of Grey College. Mark Mapletoft, who has been England's pathway boss for the past year, points out that such a crowd would just about fill Ashton Gate or Welford Road.

Captained by Charlie Bray, the sturdy Sale Sharks flanker, this England Under-18 crop began their festival by beating Georgia 66-33 before the 40-26 defeat of France. This weekend they face South Africa, a suitably grand finish. Whatever happens, England's results so far have represented an improvement from last season. Twelve months ago a young team were edged out by Georgia and lost heavily to France and South Africa.

England have fluctuated on their selection strategy for this festival over the years, picking mostly A-level leavers in some seasons and opting for a greener group in others. Mapletoft wanted to take a more mature party this time and says his squad is roughly a 50-50 split of players moving into their last year of school and those a year older who will be starting a full-time schedule with a club when they return home. The youngest individual turned 17 in April, whereas the oldest celebrated their 18th birthday last October.

There are pesky regulations to deal with in tournaments such as the Under-18 Six Nations. Explosive tight-head prop Lawrence Ogbonnaya, another Sale product, was born on December 30, 2008, which rendered him too old and therefore ineligible for that competition by two days. This festival is more flexible. As Mapletoft says, "results aren't everything". Still, after losses to Ireland and Italy this season, these victories have been welcome.

"There's a healthy tension between winning and development at the forefront of our minds," the former Gloucester, Harlequins and London Irish fly half continues. "But Lawrence hadn't won a game for England before this tour. That's not good either. You don't want to be winning comfortably all the time or on the end of big deficits. There's a happy, healthy medium. The two games we've had [this season] have been super-competitive and we've played really well, scoring some great tries. We played the best part of 15 minutes with 13 men against France, which shows a lot of mental maturity."

In March, during the senior Six Nations, a wide-eyed Steve Borthwick marvelled at the sheer size of this under-18 contingent. Bray and Ogbonnaya are indeed burly lads, as are Fin Charles and Kwame Bekoe, a pair of back-five forwards affiliated to Leicester Tigers. Jeremy Keys, the Exeter Chiefs lock, is 6ft 9in and Ellis Woolrych, another second-row from Harlequins, is only slightly shorter. Bekoe, renowned as exceptionally physical, has already played for England Under-18 on ten occasions. While he is at blind-side flanker at present, sage judges believe he could end up in the tight five.

But head coach Jon Pendlebury is clearly encouraging ambition and freedom. Slick passing, inventive offloads and smart chips have decorated England's displays thus far. Oscar Talbot, a tidy fly half very highly rated by Leicester, is evidently one to watch. Having come through in wider back-line positions, Sonny Goode, of Northampton Saints, has switched to scrum half. A similar transition is working out well for Archie McParland.

Zac Jones and Will Catley are two intriguing inside centres, whereas Saracens wing Taniel Tumusiime has drawn comparisons with Noah Caluori because of his mazy running. Caluori, fast-tracked to a couple of caps by Borthwick this summer, travelled to this same festival as recently as 2024. The England Under-18 Class of 2026 boasts serious depth when you realise that Hugh Shields and Jack Lewis, the Saints duo who went to the Junior World Championship with the under-20s, were eligible to go to South Africa as well.

Mapletoft is careful to stress that under-18s rugby is "miles apart" from the top level, partly because the volume of kicking is far less. Regardless, with Test matches becoming faster and more fractured, it will pay to keep these protégés open-minded on the field.

"I was talking to Sébastian [Calvet], the French coach, about identity yesterday," Mapletoft adds. "It's interesting, the identity of the England national side is something we've wrestled with. For France and South Africa, you could probably put blank shirts on the players and get a decent idea of what it looks like. For us, it's just not been that easy to define."

Clubs have collaborated with the RFU to devise detailed individual development plans for each player on this trip. Mapletoft is revelling in the co-operation, though finds it "a bit silly" that Woolrych will be suspended for his red card against France. After a high tackle that was clumsy rather than malicious, he believes the most beneficial thing would be to throw Woolrych back into the action.

"Youth development isn't linear," Mapletoft says. "It's messy. It can accelerate, plateau or drop at any given moment."

"You're not realistically going to have 25 capped players in an under-18 group," he adds. "Our job is to support these players to be the best they can. If that is playing for the Lions, great. If it's getting 50 caps for England, brilliant. If it means they're a club player, likewise. Their ceiling could be playing in BUCS [British Universities and Colleges Sport] or the National Leagues; so be it."

Mapletoft knows this is just the beginning for these players and is suitably measured. But for England Under-18 to go toe to toe with South Africa in Stellenberg would be exciting by any standard.

Five to watch

Lawrence Ogbonnaya
All-action tight-head prop has Asher Opoku-Fordjour as a mentor at Sale

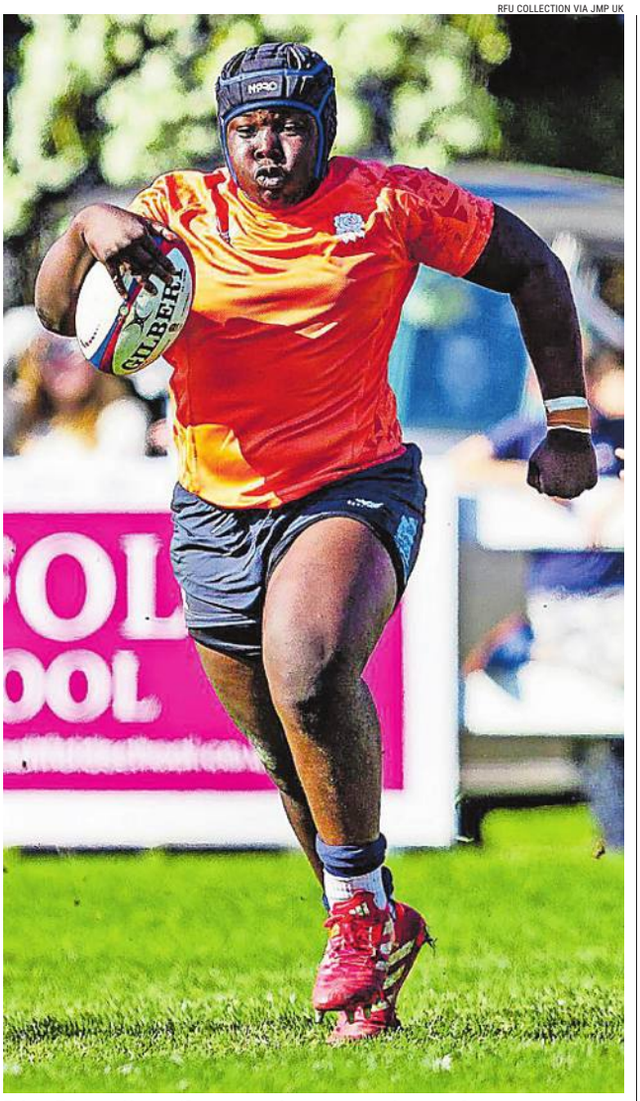
Kwame Bekoe
Leicester Tigers youngster may move to lock, but is physical and dynamic enough to be impressing in the back row

Charlie Bray
Leading from the front as England U18 captain with tryscoring performances, he is a hefty yet mobile flanker in open play

Sonny Goode
Having played at centre and fly half for the Saints academy team, Goode has shifted to scrum half

Taniel Tumusiime
Saracens wing is a rangy and weaving runner; raw but reminiscent of Noah Caluori

RFU COLLECTION VIA JMP UK



Bright England Under-18 prospects include explosive prop Ogbonnaya, above, towering captain Bray, below, and electric Saracens wing Tumusiime, inset

Grassroots game is delayed by drought

The RFU has postponed the start of the grassroots rugby season by two weeks because of "concerns about player welfare and pitch conditions".

The prolonged dry weather in many parts of England has left many ground across the country unsuitable for full contact activity.

The national leagues — below the Prem and Champ — were due to begin on Saturday, September 5 but the game's governing body informed clubs last night that the season's start date would be pushed back to the week commencing Monday, September 21.

"We know this decision will be disappointing for the clubs, schools and colleges, players, volunteers and fans looking forward to the start of the season, and we do not underestimate the impact it will have across the game," Sir Bill Beaumont, the president of the Rugby Football Union, told the clubs.

"This has been a carefully considered decision," he continued. "After listening to views from across the community game and weighing up the options available to us, we believe that delaying the start of the competitive season nationwide is the right course of action.

"While we recognise that not everyone will agree with this decision, making it now provides greater certainty for clubs, schools and colleges as they prepare for the months ahead."

Sport Racing

Newbury

Thunderer

1.25 Gamrai
1.55 Glamorous Breeze
2.35 Great Acclaim
3.10 Symbol Of Honour
3.42 Mosheer
4.20 Great Bedwyn
4.55 Dream Camp (nb)

Going: good to firm **Draw:** no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

1.25 Highclere Thoroughbred Racing Geoffrey Freer Stakes ITV
(Group 3: £56,710: 1m 5f) (6 runners)

1	(6)	4-2231	**MOUNT ATLAS** 35 A Balding 5-9-11	P J McDonald	♦119
2	(3)	212-24	**DUBAI HONOUR** 126 (T) W Haggas 8-9-8	T Marquand	--
3	(1)	24-122	**GAMRAI** 60 G Scott 4-9-8	W Buick	104
4	(4)	2-2522	**TABLETALK** 35 (P,BF) Tom Clover 5-9-8	S Osborne	113
5	(2)	62-115	**WINE DARK SEA** 36 (BF) Harry Charlton 4-9-8	H Crouch	100
6	(5)	1-26	**REBEL ROCKER** 70 Faye Bramley 3-8-12	R Hornby	98

7-4 Dubai Honour, 3-1 Mount Atlas, Tabletalk, 8-1 Gamrai, 10-1 Rebel Rocker, 16-1 Wine Dark Sea.

Thunderer's choice: Gamrai is up against it on ratings but he went close in the Copper Horse Stakes at Royal Ascot **Danger**: Mount Atlas

1.55 D&H, Excellence In Nutrition Handicap (£15,702: 5f) (13) ITV

1	(2)	121000	**REGAL ENVOY** 18 (P,D) W Knight 7-10-1	Taylor Fisher	♦94
2	(3)	3-3253	**GLAMOROUS BREEZE** 18 (P,D) C Mason 8-10-0	G Mangan	92
3	(12)	106401	**WHEELS OF FIRE** 17 (D) R Hannon 4-9-13	P Dobbs	89
4	(8)	000010	**ZIGGY'S TRITON** 18 (P,D) D O'Meara 4-9-12	W Buick	89
5	(9)	1-2600	**KINSWOMAN** 36 (D) W Haggas 4-9-12	T Marquand	92
6	(10)	641000	**SEVEN QUESTIONS** 18 (P,D) R Cowell 5-9-10	G Downing	90
7	(5)	50-400	**HUCKLESBROOK** 19 R Teal 4-9-9	S C Cronin (5)	85
8	(1)	10-024	**MAJOR NEIGH SAYER** 70 (P,T,BF) G Scott 3-9-7	P J McDonald	85
9	(13)	1-6100	**RIVER SPEY** 16 E Walker 3-9-6	Ashley Lewis (3)	87
10	(6)	430300	**RHYTHM N HOOVES** 21 (V,CD) R Cowell 6-9-2	M Ghiani	82
11	(7)	441-02	**HYPNOTISED** 17 (D) Harry Charlton 3-9-1	C Rodriguez	77
12	(11)	214522	**THE THAMES BOATMAN** 21 (P,D) R Hughes 6-8-12	S Osborne	74
13	(4)	344360	**KANISHKA** 17 I Williams 3-8-9	D Probert	77

4-1 Kinswoman, 6-1 Glamorous Breeze, Rhythm N Hooves, 7-1 Wheels Of Fire, 8-1 Major Neigh Sayer, River Spey, Hypnotised, 14-1 Ziggy's Triton, Hucklesbrook.

Thunderer's choice: Glamorous Breeze was a close third in a competitive affair at Goodwood and she is only 1lb higher **Danger**: Kinswoman

2.35 TPT Fire Handicap (£30,924: 7f) (8) ITV

1	(2)	032300	**GREAT ACCLAIM** 21 (B,C,D) E J-Houghton 5-10-2	C Bishop	102
2	(6)	04-000	**SCOVILLE** 15 (T) W Haggas 4-9-11	T Marquand	93
3	(4)	000010	**WITCH HUNTER** 7 (CD) R Hannon 7-9-10	S C Cronin (5)	95
4	(5)	013000	**HAVANA PUSEY** 17 (D) J Gallagher 6-9-9	D Muscutt	96
5	(3)	5-1360	**STELLAR SUNRISE** 21 (P,CD) A Balding 3-9-9	P J McDonald	♦103
6	(7)	-22530	**ADDISON GREY** 21 C Cox 4-9-8	H Crouch	94
7	(1)	-00303	**HUMAM** 7 (T,D) S C Williams 4-9-3	M Ghiani	68
8	(8)	345453	**CHRISTIAN DAVID** 7 (B,CD) R Hannon 5-9-1	P Dobbs	86

3-1 Scoville, 7-2 Great Acclaim, 4-1 Addison Grey, 6-1 Stellar Sunrise, 7-1 Humam, 8-1 Christian David, 14-1 Witch Hunter, 16-1 Havana Pusey.

Thunderer's choice: Great Acclaim has run some fine races in big handicaps this season and this looks an easier assignment **Danger**: Scoville

3.10 Visit Malta Hungerford Stakes ITV
(Group 2: £93,572: 7f) (9)

1	(3)	-43220	**BACK IN BLACK** 21 (T,CD) J Fanshawe 4-9-8	D Muscutt	95
2	(4)	0-5526	**NEVER SO BRAVE** 17 (D) A Balding 5-9-8	D Probert	109
3	(8)	-50246	**PRINCE OF INDIA** 35 (B,T,D) M Botti 4-9-8	P Dobbs	110
4	(1)	0-5031	**SYMBOL OF HONOUR** 28 (C) C Appleby 4-9-8	W Buick	110
5	(7)	-00263	**WITNESS STAND** 18 (P,T,CD) Dr R Newland 5-9-8	S Osborne	♦115
6	(9)	53-104	**COPPULL** 35 C Cox 3-9-2	H Crouch	113
7	(6)	1-114	**EXTREMELY ZAIN** 21 (BF,CD) W Haggas 3-9-2	T Marquand	101
8	(5)	110010	**NORTHERN CHAMPION** 14 (D) E Walker 3-9-2	Ashley Lewis	107
9	(2)	0-1066	**SUKANYA** 21 (CD) J Channon 3-8-13	R Hornby	103

3-1 Never So Brave, 7-2 Coppull, 9-2 Symbol Of Honour, 5-1 Extremely Zain, 6-1 Witness Stand, 7-1 Prince Of India, 25-1 Sukanya, 33-1 Northern Champion, Back In Black.

Thunderer's choice: Symbol Of Honour is unbeaten in two starts at this track; moving up to 7f seems unlikely to trouble him **Danger**: Witness Stand

3.42 Darley EBF Novice Stakes ITV
(2-Y-O: £20,936: 7f) (13)

1	(10)	05	**ANOTHER ENCORE** 35 Harry Charlton 9-7	S Osborne	68
2	(9)		**DIAMONDISE** W Muir & C Grassick 9-7	M Ghiani	--
3	(3)		**GALLEGO** H Morrison 9-7	P Dobbs	--
4	(5)	4	**GAMBLING MAN** 37 A Perrett 9-7	R Hornby	♦74
5	(13)		**LOTS ROAD** R Beckett 9-7	H Crouch	--
6	(11)		**MAKTOO** C Hills 9-7	D Probert	--
7	(7)	4	**MISTER WHIPPY** 23 E Walker 9-7	G Downing	72
8	(8)		**MOSHEER** Owen Burrows 9-7	C Rodriguez	--
9	(2)		**MR MONTGOMERY** Ollie Sangster 9-7	D Muscutt	--
10	(1)	2	**RED TAIL** 8 R Hannon 9-7	S C Cronin	44
11	(6)		**SAINT MUNGO** E J-Houghton 9-7	C Bishop	--
12	(12)		**SAN JOSE** B Meehan 9-7	T Marquand	--
13	(4)		**SILENT FORCE** A Balding 9-7	P J McDonald	--

3-1 Mosheer, 5-1 Mister Whippy, 7-1 Red Tail, Silent Force, San Jose, 8-1 Lots Road, 10-1 Gambling Man, 12-1 Saint Mungo.

Thunderer's choice: Mosheer makes some appeal on pedigree and is entered in the Champagne Stakes and Royal Lodge next month **Danger**: Silent Force

4.20 Swings & Smiles Supported By AP&C Handicap (£10,468: 1m 4f) (6)

1	(1)	46060-	**PINATIQUE** 279 Sir M Prescott 4-9-13	D E Hogan	--
2	(4)	160-01	**EXPLODE** 24 (D) Faye Bramley 4-9-12	W Buick	85
3	(2)	-02001	**TRYFAN** 35 (P,D) Harry Charlton 5-9-11	C Rodriguez	84
4	(5)	-20203	**GREAT BEDWYN** 36 (CD) R Hannon 6-9-11	S C Cronin (5)	♦88
5	(6)	3-0122	**MASTERINTHEWOODS** 21 (D) E Lavelle 4-9-9	M Ghiani	82
6	(3)	22-420	**NICATOR** 36 K P De Foy 4-9-4	D Muscutt	78

9-4 Tryfan, 3-1 Masterinthewoods, 9-2 Explode, 5-1 Pinatique, 7-1 Great Bedwyn, 10-1 Nicator.

4.55 Get Following BetVictor On Instagram Handicap (3-Y-O: £15,702: 1m 2f) (6)

1	(6)	1-210	**BAYAANN** 56 W Haggas 9-9	T Marquand	♦98
2	(1)	11-204	**LOST SIGNAL** 7 (BF) R Hannon 9-5	P Dobbs	98
3	(2)	1-140	**RUNMAN** 58 (T) J & T Gosden 9-4	W Buick	90
4	(5)	41-601	**GOLDEN KNIGHT** 36 (D) E Walker 9-3	H Crouch	89
5	(3)	111200	**WILD THOUGHTS** 16 (P) R Spencer 9-3	S Osborne	90
6	(4)	5-3101	**DREAM CAMP** 26 (D) A Balding 9-0	R Hornby	86

9-4 Golden Knight, 100-30 Dream Camp, 4-1 Bayaann, 9-2 Lost Signal, 6-1 Runman, 16-1 Wild Thoughts.

Course specialists: Doncaster: Trainers C Appleby, 16 winners from 64 runners, 25%; R Varian, 18 from 88, 20.5%. **Jockeys** C J Whiteley, 3 winners from 8 rides, 37.5%; C Planas, 7 from 21, 33.3%. **Lingfield Park: Trainers** N Littmoden, 3 from 12, 25%; J Jones, 26 from 132, 19.7%. **Jockeys** A Egan, 3 from 7, 42.9%; J Callan, 18 from 83, 21.7%. **Market Rasen: Trainers** T Lacey, 10 from 28, 35.7%; N & W Twiston-Davies, 3 from 10, 30%. **Jockeys** H Cobden, 11 from 36, 30.6%; J Bowen, 17 from 68, 25%. **Newbury: Trainers** Sir M Prescott, 6 from 12, 50%; O Burrows, 16 from 50, 32%. **Jockeys** C Rodriguez, 5 from 16, 31.2%; W Buick, 41 from 211, 19.4%. **Newmarket** (July): **Trainers** C Appleby, 74 from 204, 36.3%; B Millman, 4 from 13, 30.8%. **Jockeys** B Loughnane, 28 from 118, 23.7%; R Havlin, 18 from 126, 14.3%. **Perth: Trainers** O Murphy, 47 from 143, 32.9%; M Bowen, 8 from 30, 26.7%. **Jockeys** S Bowen, 83 from 261, 31.8%; Mr N McParlan, 5 from 22, 22.7%. **Ripon: Trainers** R Beckett, 6 from 17, 35.3%; R Hannon, 10 from 37, 27%. **Jockeys** H Davies, 6 from 18, 33.3%; D Tudhope, 25 from 85, 29.4%.

Ripon

Thunderer

1.45 Tommo's Queen
2.20 Rogue Jewel
2.55 Mark's Choice
3.25 Fortification
3.55 Murashah
4.30 Clocker
5.05 Saxon Grace

Going: good-good to firm in places
Draw: no advantage
Sky Sports Racing

1.45 Juddmonte EBF Restricted Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £15,462: 1m) (13)

1	(13)		**DEE'S MOCHAFELLA** Fionn McSharry 9-7	D Tudhope	--
2	(2)		**MAD JACK** E De Giles 9-7	J Watson	--
3	(11)	0	**OLD OAK** 37 R Hannon 9-7	J Leavy	54
4	(7)	03	**RULE OF THE AGENCY** 22 T Easterby 9-7	D Allan	63
5	(4)	00	**SCARLET DYNASTY** 24 G Tutty 9-7	Kaiya Fraser	36
6	(10)	20	**THE FIRST DROP** 22 A Keatley 9-7	MP Sheehy	66
7	(12)	21	**CORAL COVE** 22 James Owen 9-5	J Hart	♦78
8	(8)	05	**BEDWYR** 27 T Coyle & K Wood 9-4	O Orr	61
9	(6)	63	**NOSEY BOOK** 15 (P) T Easterby 9-4	D Fentiman	55
10	(3)	4	**SPECIAL OPERATIONS** 22 T Easterby 9-4	S B Kirrane	59
11	(9)	0434	**TEMPLE COURT** 22 E J-Houghton 9-4	C Hutchinson	61
12	(1)	0	**LONDON ROSE** 51 O Pears 8-13	C Hardie	--
13	(5)	4	**TOMMO'S QUEEN** 27 M & D Easterby 8-13	Joanna Mason	57

13-8 Coral Cove, 6-1 Temple Court, 8-1 Tommo's Queen, Rule Of The Agency, The First Drop, Bedwyr, 10-1 Nosey Book, 14-1 Old Oak.

2.20 Racing For Tamara Ripon Hornblower EBF Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £12,885: 6f) (5)

1	(3)	00	**CLASSY JAGUAR** 3 T Coyle & K Wood 9-7	D Nolan	35
2	(4)	6	**DOES MARY KNOW** 18 E J-Houghton 9-7	C Hutchinson	65
3	(1)	2	**GREEN BAY DREAM** 19 T Easterby 9-7	D Allan	68
4	(5)	0	**TAJ MAHAL PALACE** 3 B Ellison 9-7	B Robinson	32
5	(2)	1	**ROGUE JEWEL** 21 (D) E Bethell 9-6	D Tudhope	♦74

4-11 Rogue Jewel, 5-1 Green Bay Dream, Does Mary Know, 25-1 Taj Mahal Palace, 100-1 Classy Jaguar.

2.55 William Hill Supporting MND Silver Cup Handicap (£12,885: 6f) (20) ITV

1	(6)	R-0046	**WESTMORIAN** 28 (D) G Tuer 7-9-12	O Stammers	80
2	(16)	0-0004	**ROACH POWER** 68 (C,D) M Wigham 7-9-11	J F Egan	74
3	(19)	511100	**GLORY HYDE** 22 (CD) Roger Fell 5-9-10	Joanna Mason	79
4	(15)	441-40	**MYTHICAL COMPOSER** 17 (P,D) C Cox 4-9-10	J Nicholls (3)	12
5	(5)	040022	**KATS BOB** 17 (V,D) R Carr 8-9-9	W Pyle	78
6	(7)	030004	**GRANT WOOD** 12 (CD) P Midgley 7-9-9	J Hart	75
7	(10)	346224	**WOODSTOCK** 14 (V) R Carr 6-9-8	O Orr	77
8	(18)	343000	**ROBERTO CARO** 21 (T,D) A Keatley 5-9-8	MP Sheehy	♦82
9	(14)	1-2410	**MAGIC BOY** 22 (BF,D) N Tinkler 4-9-8	A Jary (3)	76
10	(11)	0-4546	**ANAISA** 22 (T,CD) T Easterby 3-9-6	JP Sullivan	81
11	(13)	430043	**GO VINCE GO** 22 (D) T Easterby 3-9-6	D Allan	76
12	(3)	356244	**EMPEROR CARADOC** 10 (B,D) P Midgley 7-9-6	D Nolan	75
13	(20)	501201	**DORNEY LAKE** 9 (T,D) L Bailey 5-9-5	B Garritty	72
14	(1)	032005	**MISTER SOX** 10 (P,CD) T Easterby 6-9-4	S B Kirrane	74
15	(12)	0-5400	**TOLSTOY** 22 (D) B Ellison 7-9-4	B Robinson	47
16	(8)	4-6110	**WHO WANTS ME** 22 (P) I Jardine 4-9-4	A Mullen	73
17	(4)	060002	**VINCE L'AMOUR** 8 (B,T,CD) T Easterby 5-9-4	D Fentiman	47
18	(9)	061265	**BEYOND BORDERS** 19 (D) G Tutty 5-9-3	Kaiya Fraser	74
19	(2)	530-03	**EDUCATING RITA** 22 (D) P Kirby 4-9-2	C Hardie	65
20	(17)	062436	**MARK'S CHOICE** 14 (P,CD) G Tutty 10-8-13	J Watson	69

7-1 Go Vince Go, 8-1 Grant Wood, 10-1 Educating Rita, Magic Boy, Woodstock, 12-1 Roach Power, Kats Bob, Glory Hyde.

Thunderer's choice: Mark's Choice is a ten-time course winner who has slipped in the weights **Dangers**: Kats Bob, Woodstock

3.25 William Hill/MND Association Great St Wilfrid Handicap (£51,540: 6f) (15) ITV

1	(3)	1-1250	**ARAMRAM** 56 (D) R Hannon 5-9-12	J Leavy	♦109
2	(5)	045010	**ROYAL ZABEEL** 35 (D) M Appleby 5-9-7	J Watson	104
3	(8)	100002	**FAST TRACK HARRY** 36 (P,T,D) C Cox 4-8-12	J Nicholls (3)	95
4	(15)	00U132	**DARK CLOUD RISING** 12 (V,BF,CD) D O'Meara 4-8-11	D Tudhope	94
5	(7)	-50044	**KHAFIZ** 13 Roger Fell 4-8-8	H Davies	85
6	(6)	014521	**LORD ROXBY** 12 (CD) N Tinkler 4-8-7	A Jary (3)	84
7	(10)	403116	**I'M NEXT** 29 T Easterby 4-8-6	J F Egan	89
8	(9)	0-1010	**MUSICAL TOUCH** 21 (D) R & P Fahey 5-8-5	W Fentiman (3)	88
9	(1)	20-000	**EYE OF DUBAI** 51 (CD) J & S Quinn 5-8-2	JP Sullivan	92
10	(13)	032610	**MANILA SCOUSE** 14 (T,D) T Easterby 7-8-2	D Fentiman	84
11	(14)	010041	**KODIAC THRILLER** 21 (V,CD) M Walford 5-8-2	C Hardie	84
12	(12)	241430	**FORTIFICATION** 49 (BF) B Ellison 3-8-2	T Kiely-Marshall (5)	88
13	(2)	022310	**IT JUST TAKES TIME** 14 (CD) M Walford 8-8-2	A Mullen	84
14	(4)	012606	**BRIGHTON BOY** 14 (D) T Easterby 4-8-2	Amie Waugh (3)	85
15	(11)	135231	**FLIGHT CONTROL** 21 (D) K Frost 3-8-2	W Pyle	85

11-2 Fast Track Harry, 6-1 Lord Roxby, 7-1 Fortification, Dark Cloud Rising, 8-1 Kodiac Thriller, Aramram, 12-1 Royal Zabeel, Flight Control, Khafiz.

Thunderer's choice: Fortification was below-par last time but had been in great heart before that **Dangers**: Lord Roxby, Fast Track Harry

3.55 William Hill World Free From MND Handicap (£7,731: 1m) (11)

1	(1)	324113	**BEST RATE** 17 (D) R Hannon 4-10-4	J Leavy	♦87
2	(8)	1622/1	**MURASHAH** 119 (H) E Bethell 5-10-3	O Orr	86
3	(7)	532205	**ANDESITE** 14 (P,T) Roger Fell 4-9-13	J Watson	85
4	(11)	000616	**CAPITAL GUARANTEE** 7 (CD) D O'Meara 6-9-10	M Winn	79
5	(6)	-30100	**HIGH POINT** 7 I Jardine 5-9-10	A Mullen	80
6	(10)	445432	**JUNGLE RULER** 17 (BF) M Appleby 3-9-9	H Davies	84
7	(2)	521211	**SWIPED** 22 (V,D) R Beckett 3-9-8	R Clutterbuck	84
8	(4)	5-6001	**ADVANCE TWENTYFIVE** 35 (V,D) R & P Fahey 3-9-6	H Russell	82
9	(9)	305423	**GARDEN OASIS** 10 (B,BF,CD) T Easterby 11-9-2	D Allan	73
10	(5)	2262-3	**HIS FINEST HOUR** 12 Miss T Jackson 5-9-2	Joanna Mason	61
11	(3)	323332	**BARLEY** 7 (P,D) T Easterby 7-9-0	S B Kirrane	68

7-2 Murashah, 5-1 Swiped, 6-1 Jungle Ruler, 13-2 Best Rate, 8-1 Advance Twentyfive, Garden Oasis, 10-1 Barley, Andesite.

4.30 Ashley Smith Memorial William Hill Fillies' Handicap (£5,234: 1m 4f) (5)

1	(3)	066	**MUSICAL ACCORD** 72 R Beckett 3-9-9	R Clutterbuck	♦70
2	(1)	3436	**TALITHA ROUGE** 23 D O'Meara 3-9-6	D Tudhope	67
3	(2)	6-4612	**CLOCKER** 17 (BF) E Bethell 3-9-4	O Orr	66
4	(4)	05661	**BLUE TULIP** 16 (D) W Muir & C Grassick 3-8-12	J Watson	4
5	(5)	643-00	**SKIRT AROUND** 72 (P) P Kirby 3-8-12	J Nicholls (3)	38

11-8 Clocker, 7-2 Blue Tulip, 4-1 Talitha Rouge, Musical Accord, 16-1 Skirt Around.

5.05 Harrogate Comedy Festival Coming This Autumn Handicap (£5,234: 1m 2f) (15)

1	(5)	442325	**SUNNY ORANGE** 3 (B) T Easterby 6-10-0	D Fentiman	♦60
2	(9)	-03443	**WAR AND LOVE** 7 (P) B Ellison 4-10-0	B Robinson	60
3	(4)	260134	**KITSUNE POWER** 3 (P,D) T Easterby 7-9-13	Amie Waugh (3)	59
4	(13)	211554	**WOODLEIGH** 17 (BF,C,D) Roger Fell 5-9-12	Joanna Mason	59
5	(7)	4432	**MARLENA'S PRINCE** 62 (H) M Hammond 4-9-11	A Brookes	44
6	(6)	003010	**DARING LEADER** 19 (D) C Kellett 5-9-10	J Hart	56
7	(3)	355005	**MAGIC RUNNER** 14 R Carr 4-9-10	JP Sullivan	31
8	(2)	64066-	**CASILLI** 366 (CD) M & D Easterby 9-9-8	B Garritty	--
9	(12)	520226	**LITTLE TED** 21 (P,CD) T Easterby 9-9-6	D Allan	52
10	(10)	553	**FELIZ NAVIDAD** 20 D O'Meara 3-9-6	D Tudhope	56
11	(11)	640311	**SAXON GRACE** 2 D Bourke 3-9-11(6ex)	S Gray	55
12	(15)	046606	**HORWICH** 25 R Carr 3-9-4	W Pyle	57
13	(8)	104463	**HIJO DE LA LUNA** 37 (V) S G West 6-9-1	A Elliott	46
14	(14)	444141	**RIDDIKULUS** 19 (B,CD) G Tuer 3-9-0	O Stammers	54
15	(1)	6-6600	**TIBERIO FORCE** 15 (B,CD) S Whitaker 7-9-0	M Winn	50

9-4 Saxon Grace, 6-1 Riddikulus, 8-1 Woodleigh, 10-1 Sunny Orange, Little Ted, 12-1 Kitsune Power, Marlena's Prince, 14-1 Feliz Navidad, Casilli, Hijo De La Luna.

FIXTURES

Today

Football

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Sky Bet Championship Bolton v Preston (12.30); Bristol City v Millwall; Charlton v Derby; Middlesbrough v Lincoln City; Norwich v West Bromwich; Portsmouth v Queens Park Rangers; Sheffield Utd v Birmingham (5.30); Stoke v Swansea. **League One** Barnsley v Bromley; Blackpool v Wycombe; Bradford City v Peterborough; Burton Albion v Stevenage; Cambridge Utd v Wigan; Huddersfield v AFC Wimbledon; Leyton Orient v Sheffield Wednesday; Mansfield v Doncaster; Notts County v Leicester (12.30); Oxford Utd v Milton Keynes Dons (12.30); Plymouth v Stockport County; Reading v Luton (12.30). **League Two** Accrington v Colchester; Barnet v Salford; Cheltenham v Rotherham; Chesterfield v Fleetwood; Crawley v Crewe; Gillingham v Walsall; Grimsby v Exeter; Newport County v Rochdale (12.30); Northampton v Swindon; Oldham v Port Vale (12.30); Tranmere v Shrewsbury; York v Bristol Rovers.

Enterprise National League Aldershot v Hartlepool; Barrow v Hornchurch; Halifax v Boreham Wood; Gateshead v Woking; Kidderminster v Eastleigh; Solihull Moors v Boston Utd; Southend v Scunthorpe; Sutton Utd v Altrincham; Tamworth v AFC Fylde; Wealdstone v Harrogate; Worthing v Forest Green; Yeovil v Carlisle. **North** Bedford v Darlington; Brackley v Hebburn; Chester v King's Lynn; Harborough v Morecambe; Hednesford v Scarborough; Hereford v Marine; Macclesfield v Radcliffe; South Shields v Chorley; Southport v Buxton; Spalding v Oxford City; Spennymoor v Merthyr Town; Worksop v AFC Telford. **South** AFC Totton v Billericay; Braintree v Chesham; Chelmsford v Truro; Dover v Slough; Farnborough v Hemel Hempstead; Horsham v Salisbury; Maidenhead v Dorking; Tonbridge v Torquay; Walton & Hersham v Maidstone; Weston-super-Mare v Hampton & Richmond.

Premier Sports Cup: Second round Aberdeen v Dundee; Dundee Utd v Celtic (5.45); Dunfermline v Ross County.

William Hill League One Alloa v Montrose; East Kilbride v Cove; Hamilton v Airdrieonians; Peterhead v East Fife. **League Two** Annan v Clyde; Dumbarton v Edinburgh City; Elgin v Kelty; Forfar v Stirling Albion; Stranraer v The Spartans.

Athletics

Alexander Stadium, Birmingham European Championships.

Rugby league

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Betfred Super League Bradford v Wigan (6.30); Toulouse v Huddersfield (8.0); Wakefield v St Helens (5.30).

Tomorrow

Football

Kick-off 2.0 unless stated

Community Shield Arsenal v Manchester City (3.0, Principality Stadium, Cardiff).

Sky Bet Championship Burnley v West Ham (4.0); Watford v Southampton (1.30).

Premier Sports Cup: Second round Hearts v Inverness; Hibernian v Partick; Rangers v St Mirren (4.0); Stenhousemuir v Motherwell.

Athletics

Alexander Stadium, Birmingham European Championships.

Cricket

The Hundred finals: Lord's: Women Trent Rockets v Sunrisers Leeds (2.15). **Men** Trent Rockets v TBC (6.0).

Metro Bank Cup semi-finals (11.0): **Leicester** Leicestershire v Notts Outlaws. **Radlett** Middlesex v Durham.

Rugby league

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated

Betfred Championship Batley v Keighley; Doncaster v Midlands Hurricanes; Halifax v Widnes; Oldham v London Broncos; Sheffield v Hunslet; Swinton v North Wales Crusaders (1.0); Whitehaven v Dewsbury; Workington v Rochdale (4.0).

YESTERDAY'S RACING RESULTS

Epsom

Going: Good to Firm (firm in places)

2.48 (7f 3yd) 1, **Bincimbal** (H Crouch, 12-1); 2, Wise And Wonderful (7-4 fav); 3, Greek Symphony (85-40). 5 ran. nk, hd. Harry Charlton.

3.23 (7f 3yd) 1, **Tansy Lane** (K Shoemark, 8-13); 2, Desert Symphony (25-1); 3, Diplomata (15-8). 4 ran. NR: Tiora Time. 1l, 1l. James Owen.

4.00 (6f 3yd) 1, **Modern Times** (David Probert, 9-4); 2, Sir Garfield (6-4 fav); 3, Ruby's Profit (15-2). 8 ran. ns, ¾l. James Owen.

4.38 (1m 2f 17yd) 1, **Private Project** (J F Egan, 22-1); 2, Mrembo (3-1); 3, Offiah's Boy (4-1). 10 ran. 1l, 2¼l. P Phelan.

5.13 (1m 113yd) 1, **Loblolly** (David Probert, 5-1); 2, Mystic Moment (25-1); 3, Chantelle (10-11 fav). 4 ran. ¾l, 2¼l. S Woods.

5.48 (7f 3yd) 1, **Play Me** (Donagh Murphy, 14-1); 2, Red Mirage (9-1); 3, Spacewoman (3-1 fav). 9 ran. nk, 1l. J R Boyle.

Newbury

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

3.00 (1m 2f) 1, **We Ride At Dawn** (Harry Vigors, 10-11); 2, Raintown (9-4); 3, Grey Fox (100-30). 4 ran. NR: Decalogue. nk, 6½l. Robert Edwards.

3.35 (1m) 1, **King High** (Callum Rodriguez, 11-2); 2, Quicken Away (5-4 fav); 3, Rupert The Brave (11-1). 7 ran. nk, 2l. Owen Burrows.

4.10 (7f) 1, **Sweetwonderfulyou** (Tom Marquand, 4-6); 2, Art Of Life (5-1); 3, Isabella De Vega (5-2). 4 ran. 1½l, 4½l. W J Haggas.

4.45 (6f) 1, **Evenfall** (Billy Loughnane, 6-5); 2, Sorrengail (11-8); 3, Coat Of Red (11-2). 5 ran. NR: Spirit Of Lyra. ½l, 2l. G Boughey.

5.23 (5f 34yd) 1, **Angels Lane** (Nicola Currie, 100-30); 2, Fast Track (9-4 fav); 3, Wateera (28-1). 13 ran. 27½l, 1l. H Candy.

5.58 (7f) 1, **Assaranca** (S M Levey, 14-1); 2, Zatsgood (11-2); 3, Media Legend (11-2). 7 ran. NR: Scutari. 2l, nk. R Hannon.

6.30 (1m) 1, **Eljas Du Bienn** (A Werle, 3-1); 2, Nehmo De Carrere (6-4 fav); 3, Lella De La Gloire (5-1). 5 ran. 3¼l, 4¼l. J Bernard.

Placepot: £23.20

Quadpot: £10.10

Jackpot: £4,776.60

Newmarket

Going: Good to Firm

5.18 (7f) 1, **Royal Instinct** (Marco Ghiani, 3-1); 2, Sontsivka (9-4); 3, Mount St (12-1). 11 ran. NR: Reborn. 4½l, 17½l. M Botti.

5.53 (1m) 1, **Gilding The Lily** (R Havlin, 2-5 fav); 2, Date Line (4-1); 3, Evening Call (11-2). 1¼l, 1l. J & T Gosden.

6.27 (1m) 1, **The Sweet Escape** (Laura Pearson, 11-4); 2, Currumbin (25-1); 3, Calyxoh (8-1). 8 ran. 3l, ns. D Loughnane.

7.02 (6f) 1, **Molly Mac** (Grace McEntee, 10-1); 2, Northcliff (15-2); 3, Fifty Nifty (9-4 fav). 12 ran. nk, 17½l. M Fenton.

7.37 (1m) 1, **Principality** (Kaiya Fraser, 7-1); 2, Tuscan Hills (6-1); 3, Mythical Guest (16-1). 10 ran. ½l, hd. Harry Eustace.

8.10 (2m) 1, **The Craftymaster** (Myla Coppins, 5-1); 2, An Bradan Feasa (13-8 fav); 3, Tarbat Ness (18-1). 6 ran. NR: Rogue Empire. Hd, 3¼l. A W Carroll.

Placepot: £86.10

Quadpot: £24.00

Thirsk

Going: Good (good to firm in places)

5.33 (6f) 1, **Final Objective** (James Doyle, 1-6 fav); 2, Scenic Route (10-1); 3, Royal Strike (9-1). 11 ran. 2½l, ½l. H Al Jehani.

6.08 (7f) 1, **National Honour** (James Doyle, 1-5); 2, Gold Key (20-1); 3, Work Like Hell (9-2). 5 ran. NR: Varzi. nk, 5l. C Appleby.

6.43 (5f) 1, **Equity Law** (D Allan, 14-1); 2, Managing Director (7-2); 3, Accrual (10-3). 9 ran. 1¼l, 1½l. T D Easterby.

7.18 (7f) 1, **Raging Raj** (T Eaves, 10-1); 2, Return Of The Gods (5-6 fav); 3, Indefensible (22-1). 8 ran. 47½l, hd. M Herrington.

7.50 (7f 218yd) 1, **Military Leader** (P Mulrennan, 15-8 fav); 2, Green Pursuit (16-1); 3, Donna Nook (7-1). 15 ran. 4l, ½l. Phillip Makin.

8.20 (1m 4f 8yd) 1, **Recobella** (Tom Kiely-Marshall, 3-1); 2, Halimede (2-7 fav); 3, Prince Achille (20-1). 3 ran. sh hd, 15l. P A Kirby.

Yarmouth

Going: Good to Firm

2.03 (1m 3yd) 1, **Matins** (Cieren Fallon, 1-33 fav); 2, Emperor Aurelius (10-1). 16l. W J Haggas.

2.38 (7f 3yd) 1, **Rock Montreal** (Ray Dawson, 2-5); 2, Mino (16-1); 3, Junior Again (9-2). 6 ran. 27½l, 2¼l. R Varian.

3.13 (1m 3f 104yd) 1, **Zachary Hickes** (Ray Dawson, 6-4); 2, Arcturus Flame (6-5 fav); 3, Divot (5-1). 4 ran. nk, 7½l. R Varian.

3.48 (1m 3yd) 1, **Heer's Sadie** (Christian Howarth, 17-2); 2, Castlekeely (7-2); 3, Nicely Curved (100-30). 10 ran. 1l, 1l. J & S Birkett.

4.25 (5f 42yd) 1, **Always Perfect** (Paddy Bradley, 13-8); 2, Creative Queen (15-2); 3, Rumble Ruby (3-1). 6 ran. ns, nk. C Fellowes.

5.00 (6f 3yd) 1, **Thanks Dad** (Mikkel Mortensen, 12-1); 2, Valadero (7-2); 3, My Mate Mackley (7-2). 9 ran. 1¼l, nk. S Dixon.

Placepot: £53.30

Quadpot: £25.20

THUNDERER'S WEEKEND GUIDE

Big-race trends
Visit Malta Hungerford Stakes (3.35 Newbury)
Nine of the past 13 winners have been four-year-olds, while ten of the past 16 have boasted an official rating of 110 or higher. That augurs well for Symbol Of Honour and Prince Of India, four-year-olds with a mark of 111 and 110 respectively.

Banker or bust?
Dubai Honour (1.25 Newbury)
The globetrotter is a multiple Group 1 winner favoured by the weights, but he's been absent since running in Australia in the spring and, aged 8, may not be quite the force of old. Verdict: BLOWOUT.

Red-hot trainer
James Fanshawe
The Newmarket-based trainer has had six winners and five runners-up from 20 runners in the past fortnight. His two runners today are Nevasca Cinza (2.10 Newmarket) and Back In Black (3.10 Newbury).

Repeat performance
Strike and Archduke Ferdinand (2.10 Newmarket)
The pair are both previous winners of the Grey Horse Handicap and will again be taking part in the charge of the silver brigade. Strike, successful in 2022, will be taking part in the race for the fifth time. He was runner-up to Archduke Ferdinand in the 2024.

What's in a name?
Mosheer (3.42 Newbury)
Mosheer is an Arabic word meaning "advisor" or "one who guides". The two-year-old colt, who will be making his debut today, is trained by Owen Burrows and owned by Sheikh Ahmed Al Maktoum.

Bet of the day
Eabha
(3.13 Newmarket)
The daughter of Space Blues is improving with every run and won in tidy style here last week. She can complete a hat-trick of wins with Billy Loughnane in the saddle.

Newmarket

Thunderer

1.35 Bin Jahwar **2.10** Act Of Violence **2.43** Hello Friend **3.13** **Eabha** (nap) **3.50** Del Corso **4.25** Stormy Music **5.00** Cherry Cobbler

Going: good to firm

Draw: no advantage **Racing TV**

1.35 Novice Stakes
(2-Y-O: £6,700: 1m) (3)

1 (3) **AL QAYED** W Haggas 9-7 **C Fallon**
2 (2) **BIN JAHWAR** C Appleby 9-7 **B Loughnane**
3 (1) **WAAQED** J & T Gosden 9-7 **R Havlin**

5-4 Bin Jahwar, 15-8 Waaqed, 5-2 Al Qayed.

2.10 Handicap
(£10,308: 6f) (10) **ITV**

1 (8) 54222 **HAVANA BLUE** 8 (BF,C) J Camacho 6-9-12 **R Sexton**
2 (10) 030-0 **MAELSTROM** 19 (T,D) S C Williams 4-9-12 **J Doughty**
3 (7) 03041 **ARCHDUKE FERDINAND** 17 (P,CD) S Spencer 7-9-11 **S Farmer (5)**
4 (2) -4604 **FIRST FOLIO** 17 (P,D) J Camacho 8-9-5 **C Lee**
5 (9) 06500 **SECRET GUEST** 19 (D) B Smart 6-9-5 **R Dawson**
6 (3) 20350 **CAYMAN TAI** 8 R Hannon 4-9-4 **S D Bowen**
7 (6) 03241 **STRIKE** 37 (CD) J Portman 8-9-2 **B Loughnane**
8 (1) 43423 **NEVASCA CINZA** 32 (V) J Fanshawe 3-9-0 **J Peate**
9 (5) 6-041 **ACT OF VIOLENCE** 28 (T,D) A Carroll 5-8-8 **S De Sousa**
10 (4) 50052 **FANCY DANCER** 15 (P,D) Hayley Burton 4-8-2 **T Heard**

100-30 Havana Blue, 4-1 Strike, 9-2 Archduke Ferdinand, 7-1 Act Of Violence, Nevasca Cinza, 10-1 First Folio, 12-1 others.

Thunderer's choice: Act Of Violence upped his game for his new stable at Ripon **Danger:** Havana Blue

2.43 Handicap
(£18,039: 1m 6f) (6)

1 (3) 51114 **GREEN SKY** 2 (BF) B Millman 6-9-12 **C Tucker (7)**
2 (6) -1123 **DOJIN** 36 (H) S Woods 4-9-12 **C Fallon**
3 (2) 32133 **ALMA LATINA** 23 (P,BF) R Beckett 3-9-0 **B Loughnane**
4 (4) 3-021 **REEM RAK** 50 R Varian 3-8-13 **R Dawson**
5 (5) 224 **HELLO FRIEND** 19 K R Burke 3-8-11 **C Lee**
6 (1) 5-002 **QUEEN ROSLYN** 22 (T) B Ellison 5-8-6 **S De Sousa**

7-4 Green Sky, 7-2 Alma Latina, 5-1 Dojin, 6-1 Hello Friend, 7-1 Queen Roslyn, 8-1 Reem Rak.

3.13 Nursery
(2-Y-O: £7,989: 7f) (5)

1 (5) 3311 **EABHA** 7 (CD) E J-Houghton 9-9 **B Loughnane**
2 (3) 2160 **KODI BEAR LIGHT** 28 K R Burke 9-0 **C Lee**
3 (2) 44130 **CASH COVE** 16 (D) C Johnston 8-11 **C Shepherd**
4 (4) 042 **PRINCESS IVY** 26 R Hannon 8-6 **S D Bowen**
5 (1) 22215 **FIRE THUNDER** 14 M Botti 8-6 **S De Sousa**

5-2 Eabha, 3-1 Fire Thunder, 7-2 Kodi Bear Light, 4-1 Princess Ivy, 6-1 Cash Cove.

3.50 Handicap
(3-Y-O: £5,154: 1m 2f) (4)

1 (2) 34211 **DEL CORSO** 12 (D) E Walker 9-11 **B Loughnane**
2 (4) 41431 **FEMME BEAUTY** 54 (T,D) Gerard O'Leary (Ire) 9-8 **C Lee**
3 (1) 64-02 **PIPILY** 28 (P) T Kent 9-4 **R Dawson**
4 (3) 10-00 **DONT GET ME WRONG** 46 (B,T) Gerard O'Leary (Ire) 9-0 **C Fallon**

8-13 Del Corso, 100-30 Pipily, 4-1 Femme Beauty, 25-1 Dont Get Me Wrong.

4.25 Handicap
(£5,154: 1m) (5)

1 (1) 52606 **RENESMEE** 15 (P,D) Michael Keady 6-10-2 **K S McHugh (7)**
2 (4) 34232 **LIGHTNING GLORY** 15 S & E Crisford 3-9-9 **S De Sousa**
3 (3) 3-323 **HAMDA'S JOY** 41 Tom Clover 3-9-6 **C Fallon**
4 (5) -0631 **STORMY MUSIC** 9 (CD) A Balding 3-9-6 **A Redman (7)**
5 (2) -3163 **LOVERS LEAP** 38 (BF) J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-3 **B Loughnane**

9-4 Stormy Music, 3-1 Hamda's Joy, Lovers Leap, 7-2 Lightning Glory, 12-1 Renesmee.

5.00 Handicap
(£5,234: 7f) (7)

1 (4) 10222 **CHERRY COBBLER** 15 (P,T,D) S C Williams 4-10-2 **C R Lyons (7)**
2 (3) -5621 **MISTER MOJITO** 11 (T,D) T Kent 5-9-13 **B Loughnane**
3 (2) 62023 **JERSEY MAVERICK** 37 (V,D) C Fellowes 4-9-12 **P Bradley**
4 (6) 31211 **NORCROSS BROW** 7 (D) Charlie Clover 3-9-12 **L Wright (5)**
5 (7) 0-060 **ASPULL** 8 (D) P McEntee 4-9-11 **Grace McEntee**
6 (5) 1034 **BUCKLOW HILL** 23 (T) C Hills 3-9-9 **C Shepherd**
7 (1) -0605 **ELECTRICAL** 14 Brian Toomey 3-9-2 **C Lee**

2-1 Mister Mojito, 7-2 Norcross Brow, 4-1 Cherry Cobbler, 11-2 Jersey Maverick, 13-2 Bucklow Hill, 12-1 Aspull, 33-1 Electrical.

Doncaster

Thunderer

2.00 Poet's Dawn **2.30** Wuood **3.05** Noble Prince **3.37** Rock Opera **4.10** Flash Rascal **4.45** Berlinetta **5.20** Sound Gloria

Going: good to firm-good in places

Draw: no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

2.00 Handicap (£4,397: 1m 2f) (7)

1 (3) 0-400 **CANVAS** 21 (C) S Dixon 4-9-7 **M Mortensen**
2 (6) 20-00 **PROJECT GEOFIN** 94 (W,CD) G Oldroyd 5-9-7 **D J Murphy (3)**
3 (2) 21250 **AMIDST THE CHAOS** 7 (C) N Tinkler 4-9-6 **E Tindall**
4 (4) 63111 **POET'S DAWN** 12 (P,D) T Easterby 11-9-5 **J Dickson (3)**
5 (7) 53105 **MOONJID** 20 (D) M Appleby 4-9-5 **T Moore (5)**
6 (1) 23346 **QITAAL** 16 (BF,CD) C Johnston 7-9-5 **H Vigors**
7 (5) 00340 **ECHALAR** 13 (H) I Williams 4-9-4 **C Whiteley**

13-8 Poet's Dawn, 5-1 Qitaal, 6-1 Moonjid, 7-1 Canvas, 8-1 Echalar, Amidst The Chaos, Project Geofin.

2.30 Novice Stakes (£5,400: 7f) (4)

1 (1) 06-0 **HOPE AND JOY** 39 L Williamson 3-9-7 **O McSweeney**
2 (2) 2-33 **ONE OF THE BOYS** 29 (P) M Bell 3-9-7 **J Dickson (5)**
3 (4) 2 **WUOOD** 163 R Hannon 3-9-7 **S M Levey**
4 (3) 5-4 **CERCIS** 25 Mrs I G-Leveque 3-9-2 **D Keenan**

10-11 One Of The Boys, 6-4 Wuood, 11-2 Cercis, 100-1 Hope And Joy.

3.05 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 7f) (6)

1 (2) **IWASJUSTSAYING** C Johnston 9-7 **J Mitchell**
2 (6) 65 **MINO** 23 M Botti 9-7 **J Gilligan**
3 (5) 0 **MINZAZI** 10 R Hannon 9-7 **S M Levey**
4 (1) 4 **NOBLE PRINCE** 18 C Appleby 9-7 **C Planas**
5 (3) 5 **SON OF A FISH** 40 R Hannon 9-7 **P Mulrennan**
6 (4) 5 **JESSICA** 14 K P De Foy 9-2 **S James**

13-8 Noble Prince, 11-4 Jessica, 7-2 Iwasjustsaying, 7-1 Mino, 14-1 Minzazi, Son Of A Fish.

3.37 Handicap (£4,397: 7f) (13)

1 (5) 41200 **ROCK OPERA** 21 (C) R & P Fahey 6-9-9 **J Garritty**
2 (11) 05111 **IMPERIAL GUARD** 19 (D) M Dods 5-9-9 **S James**
3 (7) -0020 **DOCUMENTING** 35 (D) K Frost 13-9-8 **J Mitchell**
4 (9) 00000 **BRIGHT** 19 (C) M Loughnane 6-9-7 **D Keenan**
5 (12) 32511 **THAPA VC** 18 (B,T,CD) M Rimell 8-9-6 **T Moore (7)**
6 (6) 15020 **BELLA BISBEE** 15 (CD) S Dixon 5-9-6 **C Howarth (3)**
7 (1) 40643 **NYMAN** 7 (D) Roger Fell 4-9-6 **C Horgan (5)**
8 (13) 41060 **CRIMINAL SHORE** 8 (V) D O'Meara 4-9-6 **C Whiteley (5)**
9 (2) 06000 **SUNRISEONTHEBOYNE** 14 (D) B Haslam 4-9-4 **H Vigors (5)**
10 (10) 00000 **WAR HOWL** 39 (CD) B Haslam 4-9-3 **P Mulrennan**
11 (3) 06-00 **THE CHILDE OF HALE** 73 (P,CD) I Furtado 4-9-0 **T Eaves**
12 (8) 30452 **AGE OF BAROQUE** 70 (D) Jessica Macey 5-8-13 **S M Levey**
13 (4) 00226 **STARLINER** 14 (P,D) Miss L Perratt 5-8-10 **O McSweeney**

3-1 Thapa VC, 4-1 Imperial Guard, 6-1 Age Of Baroque, 8-1 Rock Opera, 10-1 Starliner, Documenting, Nyman, 14-1 Bright.

4.10 Handicap (£5,653: 6f) (10)

1 (7) 12415 **ZUBARU** 42 (T,CD) G Scott 4-10-1 **D Keenan**
2 (5) 53101 **GOLDEN LONG** 42 (T,D) Lemos Souza 6-9-13 **S M Levey**
3 (2) 51155 **ANCIENT STATE** 19 (E,T,D) Adam Kirby 4-9-11 **W Carson**
4 (1) 2412 **COUNTY CARLOW** 71 (D) B Haslam 3-9-10 **P Mulrennan**
5 (9) 0-364 **BRUMMELL** 63 (P,D) J Camacho 5-9-10 **S James**
6 (6) 05236 **PAPA COCKTAIL** 15 (CD) M Herrington 7-9-7 **J Mitchell**
7 (8) -3231 **FLASH RASCAL** 112 (D) D Loughnane 3-9-0 **N Currie**
8 (3) 00503 **SQUEALER** 25 (BF,C) N Tinkler 6-8-13 **F McManoman**
9 (4) 04042 **LION'S HOUSE** 7 (D) Miss L Perratt 5-8-11 **F Bughanaim**
10 (10) 15005 **JUSTMYLUCK** 29 (H) Miss L Perratt 3-8-9 **O McSweeney**

7-2 Golden Long, 4-1 Flash Rascal, 6-1 Zubaru, 7-1 Papa Cocktail, 8-1 Brummell, Ancient State, Lion's House, 12-1 others.

4.45 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,397: 1m) (7)

1 (5) 66411 **CELTIC CHARIOT** 23 (CD) K Frost 9-10 **J Mitchell**
2 (6) 0-500 **TARADIF** 48 (T) Jessica Macey 9-9 **S M Levey**
3 (4) 01040 **NAPOLIAN** 5 (H,D) D O'Meara 9-8 **C Whiteley (5)**
4 (3) -0551 **BERLINETTA** 19 (D) J Channon 9-6 **G Bass**
5 (1) -6003 **LADY HORNBLOWER** 18 J O'Keeffe 9-3 **J Garritty**
6 (2) 13013 **VEGA'S VIRTUE** 12 (P,D) T Easterby 9-3 **O McSweeney**
7 (7) -3520 **SNAAFY** 15 D Loughnane 9-2 **S James**

7-4 Celtic Chariot, 3-1 Berlinetta, 9-2 Vega's Virtue, 8-1 Napolian, 10-1 Lady Hornblower, Snaafy, 16-1 Taradif.

5.20 Handicap (£3,768: 1m 6f 115yd) (8)

1 (8) 11422 **IS SHE NOW** 15 (P) D Bourke 8-10-2 **T Moore (7)**
2 (5) -7002 **CHARACTER TESTING** 18 (T,V) M Walford 5-9-12 **J Garritty**
3 (1) 0-226 **JUST ADAIR** 18 (T) J & A O'Neill 4-9-10 **P Mulrennan**
4 (6) 55504 **LEDNIKOV** 23 (B) I Furtado 8-9-7 **Elle-May Croot (5)**
5 (2) -4603 **RAJENDRA** 31 (H) D M Simcock 3-9-4 **S M Levey**
6 (3) -0031 **SOUND GLORIA** 24 R Varian 3-9-3 **J Mitchell**
7 (4) 5-540 **MANBEARPIG** 41 (P) R Menzies 3-8-12 **F Bughanaim**
8 (7) 0-055 **ALCANZOR** 23 (B) T Easterby 3-8-5 **F McManoman**

7-4 Sound Gloria, 4-1 Is She Now, 5-1 Just Adair, 8-1 Character Testing, 10-1 Lednikov, Alcanzor, 12-1 Manbearpig, 14-1 Rajendra.

Lingfield Park

Thunderer

5.13 Belle Of Kt **5.46** Paradise Angel **6.16** Wyle Cop **6.46** Hierarchy **7.16** Sansanetti **7.46** Fallacious Promise

Going: standard **Sky Sports Racing**

Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best

5.13 Handicap (£3,768: 1m 5f) (9)

1 (3) 00-12 **TENADAAY** 157 F O'Brien 4-9-9 **D Costello**
2 (4) 0-452 **BEGGARMAN** 16 (D) H Morrison 9-9-8 **J Callan**
3 (7) 03111 **BELLE OF KT** 3 J S Moore 5-9-8 **Millie Wonnacott (5)**
4 (1) 02115 **PUREIS KING** 18 (BF) Faye Bramley 4-9-7 **R Kavanagh (3)**
5 (9) 60632 **SEA OF CHARM** 15 (P,C) G Nicholls 8-9-7 **W Cox**
6 (2) 01335 **MAYWEDANCE** 3 J G O'Shea 4-9-5 **M Paetel (5)**
7 (5) -1414 **BELLE AMIE** 50 (BF) D M Simcock 4-9-5 **Taryn Langley (5)**
8 (8) 5-400 **LOUIE'S FOLLY** 15 (P) F O'Brien 4-9-4 **Laura Coughlan (3)**
9 (6) -0040 **INTO COMBAT** 9 (H,BF) Sir M Prescott 4-9-3 **L Morris**

100-30 Belle Of Kt, 4-1 Sea Of Charm, 5-1 Beggarman, 11-2 Tenadaay, 6-1 Pureis King, 8-1 Belle Amie, 10-1 Maywedance, 14-1 others.

5.46 Maiden Stakes
(2-Y-O: £4,320: 6f) (11)

1 (7) 64 **HE'S READYTORUMBLE** 33 J Channon 9-7 **E Greatrex**
2 (11) 0 **LAUNCHPAD** 33 N Littmoden 9-7 **S Donohoe**
3 (8) **PREMIUM SEAT** J S Moore 9-7 **W Cox**
4 (10) 4 **UNCLE FRANK** 75 C Cox 9-7 **Georgia Dobie**
5 (5) 65 **POSTREMO** 16 J S Moore 9-4 **Millie Wonnacott (5)**
6 (9) 60 **SILENT SADHU** 21 J R Jenkins 9-4 **R P Downey**
7 (6) 04 **HONEYMOON BEAR** 23 J Parr 9-2 **L Morris**
8 (2) **PARADISE ANGEL** J Osborne 9-2 **W Carver**
9 (3) **PEN LAN ICON** D Loughnane 9-2 **Laura Pearson**
10 (1) 6 **SNOW ON THE BEACH** 81 (H) James Owen 9-2 **M Paetel**
11 (4) 5 **WEST TO REST** 11 E Dunlop 8-13 **J Callan**

11-4 Uncle Frank, 7-2 Honeymoon Bear, 9-2 West To Rest, 5-1 He's Readytorumble, 10-1 Snow On The Beach, 12-1 others.

6.16 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,397: 5f) (4)

1 (3) 0-420 **LONDON IS BLUE** 19 (P,D) R Cowell 9-9 **E Greatrex**
2 (2) 03551 **WYLE COP** 7 (B,CD) Jack Jones 9-9 **P-L Jamin**
3 (1) 11250 **ENTER SANDMAN** 60 (P,T,C,D) R Spencer 9-6 **J Callan**
4 (4) 03253 **STOCK MARKET** 67 A Carroll 8-9 **L Morris**

5-6 Wyle Cop, 3-1 Stock Market, 5-1 Enter Sandman, 13-2 London Is Blue.

6.46 Handicap (£4,397: 6f) (8)

1 (6) 03406 **HIERARCHY** 19 (B,T,CD) J Osborne 7-9-11 **W Carver**
2 (1) 00004 **SIR ALFIE** 21 (T,D) Charlie Pike 3-9-10 **T Greatrex**
3 (3) 16040 **RILEY ROCKS** 17 (D) D Cunha 3-9-7 **S Donohoe**
4 (2) 33-20 **PERDY IN PARIS** 18 (T) G Baker 3-9-7 **B Sayette**
5 (8) 46230 **KIMBARA** 36 R Spencer 3-9-7 **J Callan**
6 (5) 66202 **LOGI BEAR** 25 (D) J Butler 3-9-6 **L Morris**
7 (4) 02116 **PUNCHBOWL FLYER** 16 (B,D) J G O'Shea 9-9-5 **A Egan (7)**
8 (7) 03540 **FAR TOO FIZZY** 21 (CD) D Loughnane 3-8-10 **Laura Pearson**

6-4 Logi Bear, 5-1 Punchbowl Flyer, 6-1 Kimbara, 8-1 Far Too Fizzy, 10-1 Hierarchy, Sir Alfie, Riley Rocks, 12-1 Perdy In Paris.

7.16 Handicap (£3,768: 1m 2f) (8)

1 (7) -6644 **SANSANETTI** 26 (CD) S C Williams 4-9-9 **P Cosgrave**
2 (8) 52105 **SCEPTIC** 28 (C) I Williams 6-9-8 **R Kavanagh (3)**
3 (6) 0-010 **BORDERLINE MADNESS** 92 (C) W Stone 4-9-7 **Josephine Gordon**
4 (3) -6540 **EQUION** 33 A Carroll 8-9-6 **Molly Gunn (5)**
5 (5) 244-0 **MAKES ME WONDER** 32 D M Simcock 4-9-5 **Taryn Langley (5)**
6 (1) 34524 **WRIST ART** 4 (T,V) James Owen 9-8-12 **M Paetel (5)**
7 (2) 03043 **MONKS MEAD** 11 (CD) M Usher 5-8-9 **L Morris**
8 (4) 00056 **PURE THEORY** 18 (P) Stephanie Cassidy 4-8-9 **O Carmichael (7)**

15-8 Wrist Art, 5-2 Sansanetti, 4-1 Monks Mead, 7-1 Sceptic, 12-1 Borderline Madness, 16-1 Equion, 25-1 Makes Me Wonder, 33-1 Pure Theory.

7.46 Handicap (£3,768: 1m) (6)

1 (2) 00036 **DARK ROSA** 25 G Nicholls 4-10-1 **Rose Dawes (5)**
2 (1) 32050 **SHAMACID** 23 (T) S Woods 4-9-12 **M Paetel (5)**
3 (3) 23121 **FALLACIOUS PROMISE** 5 (CD) J Butler 3-9-12(6ex) **L Morris**
4 (6) 31606 **MBAPPE** 31 (P,D) M Loughnane 5-9-8 **J Callan**
5 (5) -0004 **CHAPMAN'S PEAK** 23 (P,D) E Dunlop 3-9-7 **E Greatrex**
6 (4) 50423 **CREDIT FORGEDD IT** 16 (BF) S Dow 3-9-4 **P Cosgrave**

4-5 Fallacious Promise, 4-1 Credit Forgedd It, 13-2 Dark Rosa, 10-1 Mbappe, 12-1 Shamacid, 14-1 Chapman's Peak.

Perth

Thunderer

1.40 Try Them **2.15** Ras Kassar **2.50** Summergrounds **3.32** Dalileo **4.05** Squeezebox **4.40** Le Malin **5.15** Game Shadow

Going: good **Racing TV**

1.40 Maiden Hurdle (£5,446: 2m) (7)

1 25 **BIGGLES** 22 T Lacey 9-11-4 **S Sheppard**
2 P0-0 **HAWTHORN ROAD** 93 (H) I Jardine 5-11-4 **D Johnston**
3 4342/ **ST JUST IN TIME** F66 (T) Harry Derham 6-11-4 **P O'Brien**
4 06 **C'EST POUR MOI** 50-1 Hawthorn Road. **A Jackson-Fennell (7)**
5 3-42 **CRACKALACKIN** 88 (P) Dr R Newland 4-11-1 **L Scott (3)**
6 6 **TRACKER ISSUE** 22 A Nicol 4-11-1 **R Mania**
7 55-02 **TRY THEM** 44 P Neville 4-11-1 **B Hughes**

2-1 Try Them, 7-2 Biggles, 4-1 St Just In Time, 5-1 Crackalackin, 11-2 Tracker Issue, 16-1 C'Est Pour Moi, 50-1 Hawthorn Road.

2.15 Handicap Chase
(£7922: 2m 4f) (5)

1 23-11 **TAMARIND BAY** 48 (D) M Bowen 6-11-10 **S Bowen**
2 1/11- **FOLLOW YOUR LUCK** 177 P Neville 5-11-6 **B Hughes**
3 10-5R **GLEN TO GLEN** 61 (P) Nick Scholfield 4-10-12 **K Woods**
4 3/042 **RAS KASSAR** 20 (H,T) D Pipe 7-10-7 **D Johnston**
5 -5045 **KINBARA FIRSTDRAFT** 34 (W,T) L Kerr 7-10-5 **D R Fox**

6-5 Tamarind Bay, 11-4 Follow Your Luck, 4-1 Glen To Glen, 9-2 Ras Kassar, 66-1 Kinbara Firstdraft.

2.50 Handicap Hurdle
(£5,281: 2m 4f) (11)

1 U-351 **LETS MINGLE** 34 (P,CD) L Russell & M Scudamore 6-12-0 **J Power (5)**
2 5/011 **HARRY** 31 (B) D Pipe 9-11-12 **Doubtful**
3 5P-34 **SUMMERGROUNDS** 34 (D) N Richards 10-11-10 **Ella McGarry (10)**
4 21210 **DREAM'S KA** 22 (T,D) K Scott 4-11-9 **R Mania**
5 111-0 **COSMIC SOUL** 69 (T,BF,D) P Neville 6-11-6 **B Hughes**
6 -4332 **GARDE DES CHAMPS** 34 (P,T,C) L Russell & M Scudamore 10-11-6 **G Walkingshaw (10)**
7 04-41 **FOLLOW CHARLIE** 34 (P,CD) R M Smith 7-11-6 **M Dodd (5)**
8 1140- **O'FAOLAINS GLORY** 146 (D) S Corbett 9-11-5 **N Moscrop**
9 46-53 **JUST DOTTIE** F19 (C) R M Smith 8-11-4 **B Smith (7)**
10 5P-40 **ANNIE AGNEW** 85 (P) Gerald Quinn (Ire) 6-11-2 **B Macey (5)**
11 5-666 **STRUTH** 34 (P,T) L Russell & M Scudamore 6-10-7 **D R Fox**

15-8 Lets Mingle, 4-1 Follow Charlie, 13-2 Struth, 15-2 Summergrounds, 8-1 Garde Des Champs, 11-1 O'Faolains Glory, 14-1 others.

3.32 Handicap Hurdle (£5,281: 3m) (11)

1 0-412 **DOLLY DIOR** 34 P Neville 5-12-0 **B Hughes**
2 3-182 **OCTOBER HILL** 20 (P,T) D Pipe 6-11-12 **Rian Corcoran (5)**
3 4/20- **JUST OOT** 427 S Corbett 6-11-11 **N Moscrop**
4 -0311 **DALILEO** 34 (CD) Miss L Harrison 11-11-10 **C Bewley**
5 4-050 **BROKEN ICE** 32 (T,CD) J McConnell (Ire) 10-11-9 **A Harvey (3)**
6 /P-4P **CEOL DRAIOCHTA** 34 A Nicol 5-11-9 **R Mania**
7 /50-1 **DRUMLEE MYTH** 26 S McParlan (Ire) 7-10-11 **N McParlan (3)**
8 400-0 **MAGIC GLOVES** 69 (T) L Russell & M Scudamore 5-10-5 **D R Fox**
9 4-003 **FORTUNES DAWN** 34 W Young Jnr 7-10-3 **P J Kavanagh**
10 6-P0P **BURGUNDY MAN** 44 (P,T) R M Smith 9-10-2 **B Lynn**
11 P-P0 **QUINNFINITY** 44 (T) R M Smith 4-10-2 **T Wynne**

5-2 Dalileo, 7-2 October Hill, 9-2 Drumlee Myth, 5-1 Dolly Dior, 8-1 Ceol Draiochta, Just Oot, 33-1 others.

4.05 Handicap Hurdle
(£13,008: 2m) (8)

1 433P- **THE LAST CLOUD** 168 (CD) P Neville 6-12-0 **B Hughes**
2 51-11 **FILIBUSTERING** 48 (T,D) Harry Derham 5-12-0 **P O'Brien**
3 51-13 **SQUEEZEBOX** 28 (H,T,D) T Lacey 7-11-4 **S Sheppard**
4 2132- **MEDIEVAL GOLD** 172 (B,T,BF,CD) P Neville 6-11-2 **D R Fox**
5 R-131 **FIDENDUM** 41 (H,T) D Killahena & G McPherson 7-11-1 **N Slatter (3)**
6 30-22 **NAP HAND** F29 (D) C Gordon 6-10-10 **Fern O'Brien (5)**
7 3-421 **SCRIABIN** 44 (T,CD) L Russell & M Scudamore 6-10-9 **P W Wadge**
8 5-443 **PURE GOLD** 34 (CD) Miss L Harrison 6-10-3 **P J Kavanagh**

9-4 Filibustering, 3-1 The Last Cloud, 13-2 Medieval Gold, 15-2 Fidendum, 8-1 Squeezebox, 10-1 Scriabin, Pure Gold, 12-1 Nap Hand.

4.40 Handicap Chase
(£6,337: 3m) (7)

1 P-03P **SHANTOU SHOW** 24 (P,T,D) N C Kelly (Ire) 10-12-0 **S Bowen**
2 50-61 **BUTTON ROCK** 44 (C) A B Hamilton 6-11-12 **D R Fox**
3 351/3 **LE MALIN** 26 S McParlan (Ire) 12-11-12 **N McParlan (3)**
4 3P311 **EDGEWELL** 36 (B,D) Nick Scholfield 8-11-10 **H Reed**
5 30-P4 **COLLINGHAM** 22 (V) J Coulson 8-11-7 **P Armson (3)**
6 P0-54 **MCGREGORS CHARGE** 27 (T,CD) P Gundry 8-10-7 **B Godfrey**
7 4P4P- **BALLYDANGAN** 149 (D) H Burns 9-10-6 **P J Kavanagh**

15-8 Edgewell, 9-4 Le Malin, 11-4 Button Rock, 10-1 Collingham, 16-1 Shantou Show, McGregors Charge, 66-1 Ballydangan.

5.15 NH Flat Race (£2,722: 2m) (4)

1 5- **CAPTAIN MAINWARING** 282 N & W Twiston-Davies 4-10-13 **A Jackson-Fennell (7)**
2 PF-4 **DARK TIDE RISING** 98 T R George 4-10-13 **H D O'Dwyer (7)**
3 2-P43 **DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE** 31 (BF) O Murphy 4-10-13 **L Saunders (5)**
4 4 **GAME SHADOW** 7 J McConnell (Ire) 4-10-13 **A Harvey (3)**

11-10 Game Shadow, 6-4 Downtown Nashville, 15-2 Dark Tide Rising, 10-1 Captain Mainwaring.

Market Rasen

Thunderer

5.30 Centurion's Sister **6.04** Eternal Angel **6.34** Ghasham **7.04** Belvedere Blast **7.34** Huckleberry Sting **8.04** God Of Fire

Going: good **Racing TV**

5.30 Maiden Hurdle (£5,446: 2m 5f) (10)

1 40-25 **BROSNA TOWN** F14 (T) J Bedi 5-11-4 **C Rabbitt (3)**
2 000- **CREDIT UNION** 126 J Bedi 5-11-4 **C O'Farrell**
3 **EAGLE ONE** F200 N & W Twiston-Davies 8-11-4 **J Brace (5)**
4 -4256 **IFYOUHAVEAPLAN** 31 L Allan 5-11-4 **J Quinlan**
5 3223- **JENTOBELLO** 298 I Jardine 6-11-4 **R McLernon**
6 3PP-P **JUST KEEPS ROLLING** 105 (P) P Kirby 7-11-4 **J Hogan**
7 -32U3 **WAY MAKER** 41 (P,BF) M Bowen 5-11-4 **J Bowen**
8 P **ARCIMBOLDO** F15 M Sowersby 4-11-0 **C Maggs (3)**
9 3-223 **CENTURION'S SISTER** 34 (P) N Richards 6-10-11 **D McMenamin**
10 112 **PARK HALL** 33 (H,BF) D Skelton 5-10-11 **H Skelton**

2-1 Park Hall, 7-2 Way Maker, 4-1 Jentobello, 6-1 Brosna Town, 7-1 Centurion's Sister, 8-1 Eagle One, 25-1 Ifyouhaveaplan, 100-1 others.

6.04 Novices' Hurdle (£5,446: 2m 1f) (4)

1 -1213 **ETERNAL ANGEL** 28 (H) T Lacey 6-11-12 **J J Burke**
2 2-112 **LORIKO** 28 (BF) D Skelton 5-11-12 **H Skelton**
3 PP-0 **DESTINATION UNKNOWN** 26 (H) M Chapman 5-11-0 **J Best**
4 40-30 **MAYO** 70 M Bowen 5-11-0 **J Bowen**

8-13 Loriko, 11-8 Eternal Angel, 25-1 Mayo, 100-1 Destination Unkown.

6.34 Handicap Chase (£5,149: 2m 1f) (8)

1 36-52 **MY FRIEND SEAN** 31 (P,T) T Lacey 7-12-0 **J J Burke**
2 -1650 **BELLE LE GRAND** 20 (T) D Skelton 7-11-10 **H Skelton**
3 3P-53 **DOG FOX** 22 (T) O Greenall & J Guerriero 6-11-8 **J Tudor**
4 -2213 **GHASHAM** 22 (T) S England 7-11-7 **J England**
5 6P2-2 **GOWER PRINCE** 101 (H) J & A O'Neill 8-11-7 **R McLernon**
6 4-353 **CLEAN GETAWAY** 28 (P,CD) P Kirby 9-10-8 **J Williamson**
7 34322 **MISS DENVER** 33 N & W Twiston-Davies 6-10-6 **S Twiston-Davies**
8 13354 **GENBU** 22 S-J Davies 4-10-2 **C Price**

3-1 Ghasham, 9-2 Belle Le Grand, 5-1 My Friend Sean, Gower Prince, 6-1 Dog Fox, 8-1 Miss Denver, 12-1 Clean Getaway, 14-1 Genbu.

7.04 Handicap Hurdle (£4,621: 2m 7f) (6)

1 166-4 **ERNEST GRAY** 39 (P,D) A King 9-12-1 **J J Burke**
2 2-643 **BALLINTUBBER BOY** 34 (T,V,CD) N & W Twiston-Davies 9-12-0 **S Twiston-Davies**
3 1-P13 **KIWI DE COTTE** 36 (P,BF,CD) D Skelton 6-11-5 **H Skelton**
4 0-330 **BELVEDERE BLAST** 28 (D) A Keatley 8-11-3 **O Brown (5)**
5 3-124 **LOWLANDS** 34 (BF) N Richards 7-11-2 **D McMenamin**
6 -3202 **PARIKARMA** 27 S Drinkwater 9-10-5 **Miss I Mathias (7)**

11-8 Kiwi De Cotte, 4-1 Lowlands, Ballintubber Boy, 8-1 Ernest Gray, Belvedere Blast, 12-1 Parikarma.

7.34 Handicap Chase (£3,829: 2m 5f) (8)

1 -3360 **THE CLONMEL KID** 39 (P) P Kirby 7-12-0 **J Williamson**
2 -6556 **A DUBLIN JOB** 20 (V,C) S-J Davies 9-11-11 **C Johnstone-Baker (7)**
3 P6-P4 **RIBEYE** 41 (C) P Atkinson 11-11-10 **D McMenamin**
4 -2312 **HUCKLEBERRY STING** 30 (T,C) T Ellis 7-11-6 **J Andrews**
5 3542- **LA QUARITE** 340 (T,D) M Bowen 6-11-5 **J Bowen**
6 5-042 **HUIT REFLETS** 28 (V) M Walford 9-11-0 **J Hamilton**
7 -UP16 **UNCLE AL** 22 (P,D) J Bedi 7-10-11 **C O'Farrell**
8 P-066 **FAST DEAL** 26 M Chapman 9-10-2 **J Best**

9-4 Huckleberry Sting, 3-1 La Quarite, 7-2 Huit Reflets, 7-1 The Clonmel Kid, 8-1 Uncle Al, 12-1 Ribeye, 16-1 A Dublin Job, 66-1 Fast Deal.

8.04 Handicap Hurdle (£3,565: 2m 3f) (10)

1 13-11 **NO MORE BOLERO** 28 (V,C) James Owen 7-12-0 **H Cobden**
2 24/1 **GOD OF FIRE** 33 (D) J & A O'Neill 6-11-10 **R McLernon**
3 064-0 **FOUR DECADES** 22 T Ellis 5-11-7 **J Andrews**
4 43-13 **FINE POINT** 70 (P,BF) A Nicol 5-11-7 **J Thompson (5)**
5 0-543 **LONE STAR** 57 (T,C) P Kirby 9-11-4 **J Williamson**
6 006-1 **ASHDOWN FOREST** 22 D Skelton 4-11-2 **H Skelton**
7 43-04 **BALLYNOE BOY** 48 N Richards 6-10-13 **D McMenamin**
8 5-330 **QUICK OF THE NIGHT** 24 Dave Roberts 9-10-6 **L Edwards**
9 6-50P **RED TRAIL** 57 (T) M Sowersby 7-10-2 **C Maggs (3)**
10 6-0PP **PAPILLONDELUMIERE** 20 (V) J R Barlow 8-10-2 **D Noonan**

2-1 Ashdown Forest, 3-1 No More Bolero, 9-2 God Of Fire, 6-1 Fine Point, 12-1 Quick Of The Night, Ballynoe Boy, Lone Star, 33-1 Four Decades.

He can play, but can't always hear – meet the oldest England team

Owen Slot
Chief Sports Writer

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER MARC ASPLAND

Back in March — maybe you remember — we went in search of the oldest rugby player in the country and alighted on an 81-year-old playing for Bury thirds who could still do pretty much everything required of a lock forward apart from remember when he last scored a try.

"Particularly interesting," was the kind feedback from Brian Stokes, from Gloucester, who turned out to be a full back in the England over-75s hockey team. "Are you aware," he asked, "that there is an over-80s team preparing for a World Cup in Holland later this year?"

Somehow this detail had passed me by.

Thus it was that, three weeks ago, I was on the touchline of Amersham Hockey Club watching the England over-80s and over-75s teams going through their paces in their last big training session before departing to represent their nation in said World Cup.

For the over-80s, there was history to be made here because this was to be the first "Masters" hockey World Cup to recognise this age band. Last summer, England beat the Netherlands to become over-80s European champions, but never before have there been octogenarians ruling the world.

"We claim to be the oldest selected official national side," says Adrian Stephenson, the 83-year-old player-manager who says he is also a goalscorer in the Erling Haaland mould ("I don't do much apart from hanging around hoping for an opportunity").

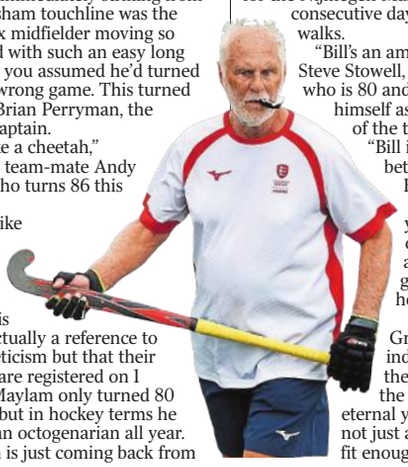
It seems that he has a point, not only about his tactics as a goal-hanger, but about his team being England's ultimate international senior citizens.

You can play over-80s football but it gets called "walking football". "People assume we must be playing walking hockey, which is rubbish," Stephenson says. "We get quite annoyed at that."

Indeed, immediately striking from the Amersham touchline was the box-to-box midfielder moving so lightly and with such an easy long stride that you assumed he'd turned up to the wrong game. This turned out to be Brian Perryman, the England captain.

"He's like a cheetah," purred his team-mate Andy Holden, who turns 86 this month.

"We're like racehorses," John Maylam says, though this was not actually a reference to their athleticism but that their birthdays are registered on 1 January. Maylam only turned 80 this week but in hockey terms he has been an octogenarian all year.



Maylam is just coming back from a heart issue, a broken arm and pneumonia so no one thought they were likely to see him on a hockey field again. That is the nature of Masters hockey: people stop coming either because they are no longer fit enough or because they are no longer with us. So they were doing double-takes when Maylam arrived at Amersham.

"Yes," he said, "that was lovely." Plus he's missed the banter: "Our changing room conversation is all: 'What pills are you on now?' "

To my disappointment, absent from Amersham was the nonagenarian who still commands a place in the team.

This is Bill Greenwood, 90, who had skipped training to be in Holland for the Nijmegen March, four consecutive days of 30km walks.

"Bill's an amazing guy," says Steve Stowell, the star striker who is 80 and describes himself as "the youngster of the team". He adds: "Bill is one of our better distributors. He can flick the ball about 25 yards with a sort of shovel-like action. And he's good company, if he can hear you."

The question to Greenwood, and indeed to all of them is this: what is the secret to your eternal youth? And it's not just about remaining fit enough to carry on playing international hockey, it's being fitter than the rest of the world. Richard Slater, the captain of the over-75s, is convinced that the general fitness of England's Masters teams accounts for much of their success, which is considerable.

Goalkeeper John Ingram-Marriott and Hugh Mason enjoy a light-hearted moment but the over-80s, among them Stowell, right, take their hockey seriously. Below, Stokes, the over-75 full back

As things stand, the England over-75s men are reigning world champions and so is every England team, men and women, at over-55s, over-60s and over-65s. As Imtiaz Sheikh, 79, who was in the GB squad at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, put it: "There is a lot of good youth coming through."

This is all very unexpected, this idea that England should have the fittest 60 and 70-year-olds in the world. Or at least in the hockey world.

I am looking for longevity tips here. Perryman, for instance, says he likes to train doing ten sets of 40m sprints; Slater cycled Mont Ventoux last summer. The general rule is never to stop.

There are a few cancer survivors here and some who have had atrial fibrillation, yet I am struck by how little surgery has been required to keep these athletes going. This is a kind of natural selection; Maylam is the outlier because in your seventies and eighties, it is almost impossible to return from major health issues and get back up to the fitness required. They are not just players, here, but survivors.

For those who hang in there, the rewards are plentiful. International sport is generally a short career; with Masters hockey, though, you can carry on up through the age groups from over-35 through to over-80 playing with the same team-mates and against the same international opposition for half a century. It thus becomes a supportive community; there are widows of players who still travel with the men's teams and likewise widowers who still travel with the women's.

Some things don't change, though. Everyone knows that the best over-80s player on the planet is John Elffers; they know that because he has been the best at almost every age grade since his days as a two-times Olympian in the 1960s. Likewise everyone knows that the Germans are physical and disruptive and that the Aussies, even when they have become grandparents, remain inveterate sledgers.

I wonder what it feels like to be representing your country when you're 80. Does it still feel amazing?

"Of course it does," Holden says. "Particularly when they play the national anthem."

"Whether you're 50 or 80," Perryman says. "You're still representing your country."

We fast forward, now, to Holland where the Masters World Cup has been under way for a week and is reaching its conclusion. There were England's women's teams at every age-band from over-55 to over-70 and men's from over-55 to over-75; at the time of writing, all nine had reached the semi-finals.

For the men's over-75s, just to reach the semi-finals, that has been four matches already in six days, all of them the same full 60 minutes that they play in the Olympics. This is one hell of a shift.

The fields thin out with age. At over-55s, there were 19 competing nations; for the inaugural over-80s event, only four.

For the England over-80s, it did not start well. They opened against the Dutch who, it seems, were still smarting from their defeat in the European final last year.

"Their goalkeeper told me afterwards that they'd been working hard for this for several months," Stephenson reports.

Elffers, the double Olympian, was apparently in notably good form. Plus England lost Maylam, the comeback man, early on. "Age caught up with him somewhere," Stephenson says, "and he did a muscle."

After a 3-0 defeat, they turned it around against Australia using nonagenarian Greenwood and his trademark aerial flicks to great effect. When the sun was in the Aussies' eyes, apparently they could not handle him.

Still no Maylam, though. "No amount of Ibruprofen was going to put him right," reports Stephenson.

Finally, the last push: a 9-0 victory over Germany with the "youngster" Stowell scoring five. In 30C heat, says Stephenson, "The Germans ran out of steam."

It is the unbeaten Netherlands, however, who are now the first over-80s world champions.

"We're reasonably happy with silver," Stephenson says.

We can be sure, though, that they will tuck this away and pursue revenge on the Dutch in two years' time, at least those who are still standing will.